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The Editors
SALT FREE DIET
THINKING HEMISPHERE

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JUNE 20, 1986

Peggy Rosenthal



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The precarious road

WHY NONVIOLENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

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nuclear ethics**

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Correspondence

Canadian benefits

Sydney, Nova Scotia

To the Editors: There is a small but fairly important misprint in my article "Forgotten Partner," May 23.

I had noted that "... the U.S. fishing industry, for example, cited literally dozens of Canadian programs, some specific (such as easy-term loans to fishermen), some general (such as unemployment insurance and Canada's universal health and medical insurance programs). . . ."

Unemployment and health insurance programs are not, of course, specific to the fishing industry, as might be implied from the printed version.

I might add that since the piece was written, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Niles has insisted that Canada's social programs are not threatened by free trade talks, while U.S. negotiator Peter Murphy has most emphatically stated that they are. Mr. Niles is right. As much as many elements of the Canadian bourgeoisie might desire it, Canadian social programs will not be subject to negotiation. The public will not tolerate this.

JORDAN BISHOP

The superiority of SDI

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: I read in the 11 April issue one of the most erroneous and biased articles on SDI I have ever encountered — and I am obliged to read all such tirades. Mr. Bruce Russett's piece, "Star Wars: A Moral Mirage," is replete with illogical reasoning and flat misstatements of fact. I can only hope that this is the result of ignorance rather than intellectual dishonesty.

Mr. Russett states that the objective of SDI is to acquire an "impenetrable shield" for population centers, or at least it was until the administration "shifted their emphasis" to protecting only missiles.

This is nonsense. Neither Mr. Reagan

nor any member of his administration has called for a perfect defense. As the president's March 23, 1983 speech clearly states, the prime objective of SDI is to shift our strategy away from Mutual Assured Destruction (in which deterrence of war depends *entirely* on nuclear vengeance) to a strategy in which deterrence is primarily a function of non-nuclear defenses which deny success to a potential aggressor. It has been so from the start and remains so today.

The "perfect defense" demand comes from the *opponents* of SDI such as Mr. Russett. It is they who insist on 100 percent effective defenses or no defense at all, mainly because perfection is such an easy straw man for them to criticize. And there is irony, if not outright hypocrisy here, because these same critics obviously never insist on perfection in arms control agreements.

Mr. Russett rattles on about the damage that would be done by 161 nuclear warheads (out of 10,000 launched) should deterrence fail with an SDI system in place. He doesn't bother to compare that with the damage done by the 10,000 warheads which would hit their targets should deterrence fail under the MAD doctrine — a condition he would perpetuate by his arguments. And then he has the audacity to describe 161 warheads as the Reagan administration view of "acceptable damage" (the quotes are Russett's). No such argument has ever been put forward. *No* nuclear weapon landing on America is the only "acceptable" level, and SDI is designed to give us the best possible assurance that there will be no nuclear war at all, a far better deterrent than the mere threat to slaughter Soviet citizens entailed by the MAD doctrine. Further, SDI would stop nuclear missiles from striking us even if fired by mistake, or by a fanatic in some third country. This dread possibility cannot be countered by any other approach — not arms control, and certainly not by continued reliance on a strategy of nuclear vengeance.

Mr. Russett tries to make the case that Mr. Reagan called for SDI in response to the bishops' pastoral letter. Nonsense! I know as an advisor to Mr. Reagan in 1976 that he was even then concerned

about the moral content and military inanity of the MAD doctrine. I also know that as early as February 1980 he was much interested in the alternative to deterrence through threat of nuclear vengeance, an alternative which non-nuclear space defense would provide. I know because I briefed him on the concept myself. So Mr. Reagan was concerned about the morality of our military posture in the "Nuclear Era" long before Mr. Russett and company attempted to press our Catholic bishops into the service of the nuclear freeze movement.

Further, the bishops were each provided a copy of the essentials of the SDI concept well before the pastoral letter was published. I personally pleaded with Cardinal Bernardin to at least *consider* the concept of non-nuclear defenses in that letter. He demurred, saying the bishops were not capable of dealing with the technology of defensive weapons — a strange position, since they seemed to consider themselves capable of technical judgments about *offensive* weapons and their effects.

These are but a few of the blatant misstatements in the Russett article. The truth is that Mr. Russett parrots all the anti-SDI arguments presented by the Soviet Union in its slick propaganda piece, "Star Wars: Delusions and Dangers," published by the Soviet Military Press. He adds only his own sneers about the superior morality of SDI over his option — deterrence through vengeance; or MAD. SDI is morally superior because it protects the innocent instead of

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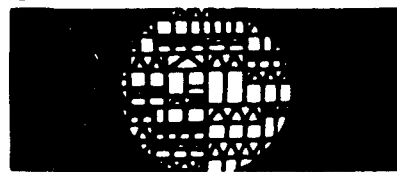
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SALT FREE

PRESIDENT Reagan's announcement that the United States is prepared to abandon the provisions of the 1979 SALT II agreement later this year may be more ominous than the reports from Chernobyl. Secretary of State George Shultz's subsequent announcement to NATO ministers at Halifax that SALT II is "obsolete" (in biblical terms, fit to be trampled under foot), led Canadian Minister of External Affairs Joe Clark to respond with a number of other Western allies that this most recent development is "profoundly disturbing."

Mr. Reagan has consistently had a low tolerance for SALT (Strategic Arms Limitations Talks) from its inception. He has repeatedly called the process "fatally flawed." In fact, the real wonder is that his May announcement didn't come much earlier in his administration. Although public opinion pressures and the precedent of previous presidential initiatives may have constrained Mr. Reagan to abide by SALT up until now, forcing him to go through at least the motions of arms control, finally the president's deeper instincts for competition and deregulation in all matters have come to the fore — even in the area of the arms race.

This need not be surprising. Witness Mr. Reagan's eventual decision to shell Beirut, invade Grenada, and bomb Libya. All came like thunder claps from the humid clouds that had invariably compressed round the white summit on Pennsylvania Avenue. Like them, the president's SALT decision was issued not as an anomaly, but as the revelation of essential intent and character. Like them, the president's SALT declaration has cleared the air. "Comings out" offer at least this: the welcome release of a climactic if impermanent moment of honesty.

But what follows that "moment"? Life must still be lived. (Unless, of course, there is embedded in the revelation a profound death wish, one that not only gambles on the world's fate, but invites it.) In real life, the maintenance of the boundaries must persist day to day, the effort to face, withstand, and perhaps even convince an adversary. Such tension is the prelude to every tomorrow, if there is to be one.

It has never been difficult to list the flaws of SALT. They are so many they invite a certain consensus even among traditional partisan opponents. But there is one thing adversaries of SALT, including the president, must take into account concerning the accord's failure: To abandon SALT is to forsake what little restraint the superpowers have observed in respect to strategic weapons in the last decade. The proof of this constraint is considerable, undeniable in terms of rocket launchers and the number of nuclear warheads alone. To abandon SALT is to realize that a liquid hydrogen is escaping from another of our O rings. The Congressional Research Service estimates that without SALT each superpower could more than double its strategic nuclear weapons by 1992. We may have seen nothing yet.

Soviet non-compliance with SALT II is real in a number of areas. Yet experts have concluded that the most serious of the purported Soviet breaches are at best

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ambiguous in their impact, and have marginal effect on American national security, especially when weighed against the more numerous achievements of the SALT agreement. Senator Albert Gore, Jr., an astute congressional observer of matters relating to arms control and a critic of the president's SALT decision, noted recently that with but a few exceptions the Soviet Union has "scrupulously abided by the numerical limits" of SALT II. Perhaps Senator Gore puts too much reliance on those numerical limits. Yet it can't be denied that in accord with the 1979 pact, the Soviets have dismantled more weapons than the U.S., and they would be required to dismantle even more in the future. Up to the time of the president's announcement, they appeared ready to do so. Should the constraints of SALT II be abrogated, the Soviet Union could quickly increase the number of warheads on its heavy SS-18 missile from ten to thirty apiece, and according to Paul Warnke, who negotiated the 1979 treaty, the USSR could augment the number of its combat-ready warheads in short order by more than 6,000.

Is this the security Americans want? Would this be the kind of arms race we could tolerate or afford? How does it sit with our allies? Why was NATO abashed at the president's announcement? Is this a test balloon for abandoning the 1972 ABM Treaty? (The same arguments that the administration cites for abandoning SALT II it has applied equally to the ABM treaty, Mr. Reagan dismissing them both as "pseudo arms control.") Why has General Abrahamson said, just before the president's announcement, that for SDI to be effective, it must be within the context of an arms control strategy? Why have the Soviet Union's proposed moratorium on nuclear testing, its recent offers on verification, and its apparent flexibility on SDI research all been greeted with apparent disregard by Washington's designated arms control arbiters? Will future historians look on SALT not as a prelude to essential arms reduction, but merely, as the Reagan administration seems to have concluded, a brief and ineffective hiatus in all-out arms escalation?

After six years, the president's deck is finally face-up on the table. It appears to be all clubs and spades. What an irony, as we wrote in our last editorial, "Rethinking Arms Control" [June 6], that Mr. Reagan was in a better position to achieve arms control than any other recent president. What a failure should such an opportunity be misspent. But asking the Reagan administration to rethink arms control is apparently like asking Captain Ahab to rethink whaling rights. The culminating section of a recent statement on U.S. defense strategy by Caspar W. Weinberger (*Foreign Affairs*, Spring 1986) was



In keeping with *Commonweal's* usual summer schedule, only one issue will be published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated July 11.

devoted to "competitive strategies." Writing about weaponry, the secretary of defense insists that "we must vigorously expand the number of areas in which we compete." At this point it is necessary to register alarm in the court of moral and public opinion, and for those farsighted elements that still remain in our governing apparatus to propose real alternatives.

WE, THE AMERICAS

Why pay special attention to one ad hoc group's discussion of problems in the Western Hemisphere? The roster of participants provides a clue. Modestly calling themselves "concerned citizens" in the published report ("Rebuilding Cooperation in the Americas," Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, Washington, D.C.) are the former presidents of Ecuador, Panama, and Costa Rica; writers Mario Vargas Llosa and Carlos Fuentes; foreign ministers, finance ministers, academicians, corporate executives; and names like Hesburgh, Feinstein, McNamara, Muskie, and Vance. Current heads of national governments were excluded.

Of course, the primary reason to read and heed the third report issued April, 1986 by the Inter-American Dialogue is that this brief consensus statement — enhanced by the twenty-four individuals whose exceptions to precise points are printed in the appendix — is clear, balanced, and sound.

What is more, presenting the issues as *hemispheric* concerns serves to reshape and refocus the current debates about the region. Sol Linowitz, former U.S. Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS) and current co-chairman of the Dialogue, articulates the message which runs like an undercurrent through each of the four chapters of the report: "It is time to rebuild inter-American cooperation." Simply stated; urgently needed. To suggest such cooperation as the means to solve the problems of "the Americas" is to correct the misconception which seems to lurk behind much recent U.S. policy: that Latin America is merely one more playing field on which to wage the U.S.-Soviet competition; Canada, when remembered at all, is but a silent spectator sitting on our side of the bleachers. The broader and more subtle picture of inter-American relations as presented in this report is a welcome perspective.

One chapter each is devoted to making the following points, with nuance and detail which can barely be suggested here:

- The present financial crisis in Latin America, worsened since the global recession of the eighties despite an increase in productivity, requires restructuring of the debt and an infusion of capital to stimulate growth. But the recently proposed Baker plan, which focuses on fifteen of the largest debtors, is too

(Continued on page 358)

CAPTION MARVEL

Weren't Archbishop Rembert Weakland's gesture and both his and Michael Novak's facial expressions absolutely pregnant with potential meaning? Wouldn't *Commonweal* readers have a field day writing hilarious captions for this photo? Well, it wasn't so easy after all. The peculiar wackiness of the picture proved harder to pin down in words than we had anticipated.

Not for want of trying, however. Almost fifty readers sent entries, many proposing two or three alternatives. A few seemed to miss the point altogether, sending us deadly serious summaries of the pastoral letter. Archbishop Weakland, one entry explained, is proclaiming that "Christianity and capitalism are not synonymous; capitalism is not an appendage of Christianity. The Christian ethic predisposes one toward a just distribution of the world's goods," etc., etc. Michael Novak, on the other hand, "listens disconsolately because, for him, only the capitalist system can guarantee the rights, freedom, and dignity of the individual person." *L'Osservatore Romano* couldn't have put it more succinctly.

Naturally, the outstretched hands inspired numerous captions having to do with episcopal fish stories and a doubting Novak. Extra points to those like Rev. Harry J. Meyer of Cincinnati and Lawrence O. Johnson of Portland who managed to work in an *ichthys* or its iconographic equivalent.

Next most popular theme: music. Songleader Weakland is launching into everything from the *Internationale* to a simple "All together now - give me your do!" (Rev. William J. Gormley of Long Island warns, "You'll go broke if you catch the pitch. The bishops get the do.") John Cort of Nahant, Mass., has a nice variation: Archbishop Weakland declares, "Comes the revolution you'll sing Gregorian chant and like it." Afficionados will recognize the *hommage* to a left-wing line about "strawberries and cream." Most of these entries had Mr. Novak merely humphing "Off-key again!" or contemplating recycling the archbishop to Juilliard.

Most entries took the form of dialogue, but not of the ecumenical variety.

WEAKLAND: *You ask me why I prefer "economic democracy" to Mr. Novak's "democratic capitalism." I say to you: Watch the nouns! The nouns are in charge here!*

NOVAK: *Sinful socialist syntax!*

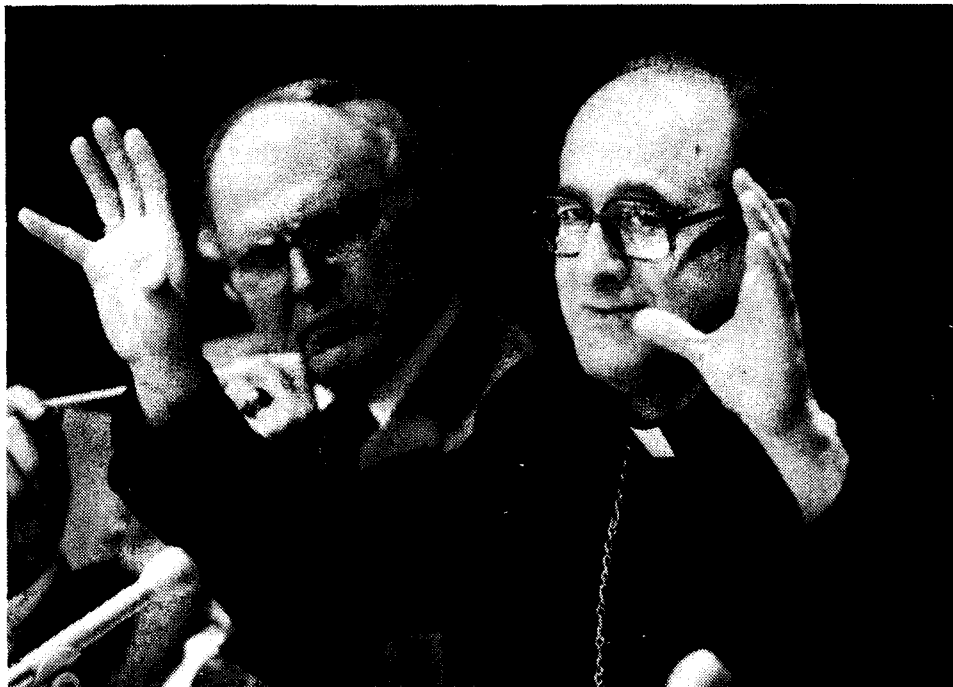
ROBERT HOYT, New York

WEAKLAND: *Behold the birds in the air!*

NOVAK: *I am!*

HELEN KELLEY, Los Angeles

Andrew R. Mulroney of Boston had Weakland either ready to pounce ("All right, Buckley, I'm ready for you!") or on the defensive ("Now, now, Mr. Simon, you can put the gun away!"). We had to signal thumbs down on a couple of entries involving the Invisible Hand. But some sort of palm should go to Daniel J. Kane of Cincinnati for "Observe, we have nothing



up our sleeves." Timothy J. McComas, also of Cincinnati, has Novak thinking, "Stigmata? What stigmata? I don't see any nail marks!" And there is a fitting goofiness to the caption suggested by Sister M. Immaculata Muldoon, C.S.J.: "All I asked him was what a Rembert is!"

A few entrants attributed somewhat un-Christian sentiments to the two principals (actually, a lot of entrants did). The aforementioned Mr. Mulroney, for instance, had Novak musing, "I wonder whether this pencil would fit in Rembert's ear." George Harrison of Kent, Ohio imagined Archbishop Weakland explaining: "While very difficult to believe, it is nevertheless true that J. Peter Grace's head is this big."

Maybe we looked at this photo too many times, but in the end we opted for simplicity. Tied for first place are:

"I see a consensus of enormous proportions!"

WILLIAM L. COOKE, M.D., Modesto, Calif.

"Excuse me a moment, while I show Michael here how many commandments there are."

ANGELA DIXON, New York

Two-year subscriptions to these winners. One-year subs to Mssrs. Harrison, Mulroney, McComas, Kane, and to Sister Muldoon. Thanks to all.

small in scope to bring about the necessary economic stability. So, whether or not one approves the five-point plan recommended in this report, the case is convincingly made for a comprehensive solution rather than the present policy of "stumbling from crisis to crisis."

● A secure peace in Central America — read Nicaragua, because the negotiations called for in El Salvador are an internal matter and confound outside action — depends upon negotiating verifiable and enforceable security arrangements. Such measures now being discussed by members of the Contadora group are obstructed by military and paramilitary efforts in the region. Both the U.S. and Nicaraguan policies are blamed for the impasse: "Nicaragua must . . . reduce its military ties with Cuba and the Soviet bloc nations by agreeing to the withdrawal of military personnel and to restrict arms acquisitions from those nations. At the same time, the U.S. must agree to accept a verifiable security agreement achieved through negotiations, rather than trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government."

● The emerging and still fragile democracies of Latin America can be consolidated best by debt relief, domestic attention to social equity, and the resolution of inter-state conflicts. Yet other nations must support democratic governments by symbolic and material backing, especially where human rights and freedom of the press are observed.

● Curbing the drug trade requires long-term strategies aimed at both the supply and demand sides of the problem: "Nothing is more important in the fight against drugs throughout the hemisphere than a sustained reduction in U.S. demand."

While neither the descriptions of these four problems nor the proposals to remedy them are original, the report is a terse but sophisticated primer for hemispheric relations, emphasizing a sustained call for regular face-to-face meetings among nations and for openness to "new approaches" to problem-solving. Finally, the authors' doggedness in pursuing political rather than military solutions is rooted in a well-substantiated hope that a democratic hemisphere is within reach. But it cannot be achieved unilaterally or even bilaterally. This is at once the good news and the bad.

SPRIT OF TORONTO?

When Cardinal Ratzinger talks, people listen. At any rate, some five thousand people were listening last April 19 when the cardinal spoke in Toronto on theology and the church. The event was noteworthy for several reasons besides the lecture itself and the size of the audience. For one thing, when a questioner, obviously sympathetic to Ratzinger, made harsh comments on Father Charles Curran, the cardinal warmly affirmed Curran's "great faith" and Catholic loyalty. One dare not be so optimistic as to assume this augurs a change in policy. It was, however, a bit of decency worth underlining in the face of ludicrous opinions about Father Curran held by some of his critics.

Another noteworthy development was the face-to-face

question-and-answer session Cardinal Ratzinger accorded to members of the theological faculties associated with the University of Toronto. The questions were polite but substantial and often pointed. The cardinal's replies were serious although, not surprisingly, often inconclusive. More important was the simple fact of the exchange: the successor to the Holy Inquisitor was engaged in direct, open give-and-take with theologians.

There was much deserving of thoughtful discussion — and resistant to summarization — in Ratzinger's rich reflections on the intimate relationship of theology to conversion in Christ alive in the Spirit and the church. Between these reflections, however, and the practical controversies now agitating the church, a considerable gap remains. No clear principles emerge for adjudicating the difficult cases where development and continuity are in tension. All seems a matter of emphasis, of interpretation of certain ambiguous terms, of balance. Ratzinger did not appear to reply directly to the theologians' concerns as much as weigh them against other considerations — which is easier to do if you are the one reading the scale.

In Toronto as elsewhere, Cardinal Ratzinger displayed three characteristics of his thought that have very practical implications. First is a spiritualized, ahistorical view of the church that does not come to grips with its failings, its *sinfulness*. The church is Christ's body but also, again and again, an obstacle to conversion and rebirth. The recent document on liberation theology, for instance, acknowledges modern strides toward freedom and presents the church as their true source, interpreter, and defender. The bitter fact that the church opposed or stood indifferent to so many of these struggles is hinted at only in a reference to "errors of judgment and serious omissions for which Christians must be responsible." As though the problems had only been individual and not corporate and structural.

Second, Cardinal Ratzinger tends to cast conflicts over theological scholarship in terms of service to the church versus individual academic independence and "the objective freedom of scientific thought." Posed that way, the problem can very easily boil down to church versus university, the Gospel community versus the norms (and prejudices) of secular scholarship. Of course, the magnetic pull of secular standards is always real for the Catholic scholar — just as the magnetic pull of power is always a temptation for the church official. But the truth is that the theological conflicts currently most intense are rooted not in theologians' divided loyalties between church and university. (At least in the U.S., theologians are hardly in line for reaping much academic prestige anyway.) Rather, the most intense conflicts center around what is best for the church.

Third, the cardinal once again underlines the church's — and the theologian's — responsibility to care for "the faith of the simple." One must note, but perhaps not dwell upon, the dangers of a self-serving paternalism in this use of the "simple people" and the "little ones," as though they had not been endowed with active capacities of their own. But the real problem is that these "simple" are always imagined as shaken and scandalized by theological revision and development,

never by the lack of it. On the contrary, it would seem that the "little ones" should also include all those ordinary Catholics whose confidence in the church's teachings on sexual morality have been shaken by Rome's apparent distance from the reality of their own marital experience; who are scandalized by the contrast between the church's defense of individual rights in the world and its centralization of authority within; who are wounded by their second-class status as women or laity; who in dark moments and moral crises feel that the living individual has been abandoned for abstract law. The faith of "little ones" has as often been broken by theology's refusal to respond to new realities as by its precipitous innovation. In Toronto, Cardinal Ratzinger said some intriguing words about "this primacy of the faith of the simple people": "The truly important realities involving humanity are brought about by simple perception that is accessible to everyone. . . . The Creator has gone about his work in a thoroughly democratic way." This is an insight that can cut more than one way.

It would be naive to think that Cardinal Ratzinger's Toronto message promises any easy resolution of the current disputes over theology and the church. But his words pointed toward more common ground than perhaps even the cardinal recognizes. And his session with the theological faculties represented a real step toward dialogue. These observations are made in that spirit.

Party politics

MAINSTREAM CURRENTS VARIATIONS ON A POPULIST THEME

THERE are not many mavericks in Congress today. But there is one exception who proves the need. He is Jim Leach, a thoughtful, courageous young representative from Iowa. He is the driving force behind something called the Mainstream Forum, a small band of Republicans who wish to say that the Republican party is not just for Reaganauts but other kinds of conservatives (Burkeans? Madisonians? admirers of Lincoln?) and forlorn souls once known as liberal and moderate Republicans as well.

Once that breed occupied what was called a "wing" of the party, and boasted senators like Clifford Case and Jacob Javits. But the wing collapsed with the political and personal burnout of Nelson Rockefeller.

Now a new age demands a new kind of alternative GOP-er. This crowd is not exactly what you would call liberal. They are more practical, policy-oriented, and some might say humane, than their brethren to the right. Their road will not be easy.

Though Mainstream, when asked, identifies itself with the likes of George Bush and senatorial candidate Jim Broyhill, its members take positions that are almost impossible to imagine contained in a GOP presidential platform or congressional

candidate's stump speech. They oppose a constitutional ban on abortion and endorse the ERA. They want an Economic Equity Act to combat discrimination against women in credit matters, stronger fair-housing legislation, a test-ban treaty, a comprehensive arms-control treaty, an expanded peace corps, and more environmental protection.

Mainstream hints at the need for a tax increase and greater distancing of the United States from Israel. And they call for deeper defense cuts than do Democratic leaders like Les Aspin.

The new independent Republican is not an Eastern elitist like Rockefeller or Elliot Richardson. (The Goldwater people finally won that old battle for the heart of the GOP.) Rocky left politics in disappointment and disgust. Richardson repudiated the party platform at the 1984 convention. No, these Republicans, like Leach and Lowell Weicker, are made of sterner stuff. They will fight. History, good sense, and sometimes Pete Domenici are on their side.

An even more interesting group has risen up in the Democratic party. Their existence is also premised on the notion that politics, like business and thought, works best when there is competition. They might be called the non-neos. They do not advocate a new variation on the current wisdoms and pieties. They hark back to earlier traditions, principally what is called populism.

They are the New Populist Forum, and though there are some congressional members of the forum like Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, the driving force behind this mini-movement is Jim Hightower, Agriculture Commissioner of Texas.

They just had a primary in Texas. The Democratic governor, Mark White, Jr., a neo of some kind or other, had token opposition. He got 53.8 percent of the vote. Hightower also had token opposition for renomination, but he got 81.3 percent. It is commonly said that Texas is "conservative," but Hightower says it is populist.

Meaning? Meaning that the notion that most farmers are overly subsidized is seen as nonsense. (Hightower says that Ronald Reagan's idea of a good farm program is Hee-Haw.) Farmers are victims of a lousy trade balance. Doctors, now they are overpaid!

Texas populism inveighs against homogenization, bureauc-

Balos



"For heaven's sake, Ellen - I didn't ask to be born a conservative Republican!"

racy, chain stores, big banks, and probably the TV networks. It is based on the simple notion that the exalted should be regulated and taxed, the humble employed. The tradition has a long history. And it isn't a bit like New York liberalism. This populism bears no love for the Russians, Bella Abzug, Japanese cars, or *Rolling Stone* magazine. It is the political philosophy of the underdog, and its spirit was expressed by Texas politicians like Wright Patman and Ralph Yarborough. (The latter was Hightower's first employer and lost his Senate seat because he came out against Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam War.)

Hightower is swimming upstream in his party, too. But Democrats in search of themselves might consider competition as a viable political strategy. They might consider the neo's 53 percent against the Texas populist's 83. Hightower stands for something; he has a center. Any Democrats here for a voice, not an echo?

KEITH C. BURRIS

(Keith C. Burris is an editorial writer for the Winston-Salem Journal, Winston-Salem, N.C.)

Nicaraguan war

THE DOGS NEVER LIE COSTS OF THE 'CONTRAS'

POLITICAL debate in this country about social change in the third world is often clouded by a tendency to read into the present our personal hopes and fears for the future. The controversy around aid to the U.S.-backed *contras* fighting the Nicaraguan government has suffered from such distorted images. On the one hand, the Sandinistas have been unduly characterized as "totalitarian" thugs and the *contras* as "freedom fighters." On the other hand, the *contras* are more than the terrorizing remnants of Somoza's National Guard, and the Sandinistas are definitely less than the popular heroes who can do no wrong. Such simplistic characterizations are belied by the voices of those living under the many guns which cast their dark shadows across the Nicaraguan countryside.

The war-torn region of Nueva Guinea in southeast Nicaragua has a population of 117,000 scattered across the agriculturally-poor, tropical savannah. Much of the population lives in fear. Many dread the Sandinista military which drafts the youth to fight a war they seek to avoid and which imprisons those suspected of collaboration with the *contras*. They also fear the *contras* who kidnap people from their homes in the dead of night and brutalize and murder those who participate in government programs. These people are victims. And their pain and grief are only exacerbated by the war. U.S. aid to the *contras*, based on a simplistic and dangerously skewed analysis of the dynamics of change in Nicaragua, only

postpones the possibility that their real problems of stifling poverty and limited political participation will be resolved.

In recent interviews in Costa Rica, clearly traumatized Nicaraguan refugees from Nueva Guinea recounted abuses they had witnessed at the hands of the Sandinista military. A father in tears described a night-time encounter with the army while he and others were hiking to a prayer meeting. His son was killed. A Delegate of the Word (Catholic lay minister) told of the execution by the army of two of his co-workers in a remote community. Neither witness charged that those who were killed, for allegedly aiding the *contras*, had been victims of religious persecution. Rather, they were casualties of the war.

Local officials in Nueva Guinea were frank in acknowledging that such abuses have occurred and that they cannot be tolerated on moral, political, or even military grounds. The Catholic priest there corroborated the killing of the lay delegates and said he had requested and been promised a full investigation. Many Sandinista military personnel have reportedly been convicted and imprisoned for such crimes. Prominent international human rights groups such as Americas Watch have concluded that abuses are not common, nor, apparently, a part of official policy.

That such abuses should occur is due in part to the highly conflicted nature of Nueva Guinea. In other areas of Nicaragua the poor majority have reaped the benefits of educational, health, and land reform programs. In contrast, the social programs and limited resources of the revolution have barely reached the relatively unorganized and sparsely populated communities of Nueva Guinea. Exploiting this vulnerability, Eden Pastora's (ARDE) *contra* group had some success in building political support. However, the U.S. has preferred to fund the area's unpopular but more "reliable" Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN) which is dominated by Somoza's hated National Guard. As a result, ARDE is now in tatters.

Nonetheless, it only takes marauding bands of ten to fifteen to wreak havoc with the civilian population. During a recent visit to Los Angeles, Nueva Guinea, population 1000, complaints were voiced about *contra* kidnappings which occurred regularly. And the community grieved the deaths of thirteen local residents killed by the *contras* in the preceding six weeks, including a twenty-two-year-old woman, her five-year-old daughter, and her sixty-two-year-old mother. The



contras appear to avoid confrontations with the army. Instead, with the help of informants and, apparently, as a matter of policy, they consistently target those who lend any support to the revolution: health workers, teachers, individual militia members, members of cooperative farms. The co-op in Los Angeles is defunct because the members fear for their lives. The *contras* have killed twenty-one members of the nearby Jacinto Vaca co-op which nonetheless continues to produce. Others, like the family mentioned above, are killed simply because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is a sickening feeling to gaze into the timid, innocent, and uncomprehending eyes of a seven-year-old boy whose sister, mother, and grandmother have been murdered and to realize, even though he doesn't, that our tax dollars are funding the war that claimed their lives.

In this situation, while the government can do little to solidify popular support, it will do what it feels necessary to maintain military control in the face of foreign-sponsored aggression. Military abuses of authority to combat *contra* infiltration, while only exacerbating the government's predicament, are nonetheless predictable, whether because of inadequate training, poor discipline, or immature or crazed individuals. Meanwhile, most of the population of Nueva Guinea, seeing no hope in a war which only seems to grind on and to grind them up, desperately grasps at an illusory neutrality and finds instead fear and helplessness.

Margarita Bermudez, a wizened peasant woman whose face traces the strain of her long, hard life, spoke of the continuing violence in Los Angeles and the steady stream of migration it has produced to larger, more secure population centers. In a tone that pleads for solace she says, "I am terrified when I hear the dogs bark in the night." To demonstrate, she crosses her arms, clutches each shoulder, trembles all over, and solemnly says, "The dogs never lie."

The Nicaraguan revolution is clearly imperfect. The im-

pressive social gains it had achieved before the war curtailed such efforts show it also to be, on the whole, an earnest attempt to serve the poor majority. While it has been less vigilant in defense of political liberties, it nonetheless compares favorably with other Central American countries in that regard, in spite of the war. Eastern Bloc influence is significant. But the charge that Nicaragua, after decades of struggle to throw off U.S. domination, will trade that for Soviet or Cuban domination reveals a lack of familiarity or concern for the needs, aspirations, and determination of the Nicaraguan people. Whether or not we recognize that Nicaragua has the right to chart its own course and make its own mistakes, we cannot avoid the fact that many, many Nicaraguans are clearly willing to die for their revolution. As visits to the war zones graphically reveal, it is all too often the innocent who are being slaughtered.

In January, U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Louis Tambs told a visiting delegation that even in the event that the Central American nations signed a Contadora Peace Treaty, the U.S. "would have to wait and see whether it respects the sovereignty of (those) countries" before deciding whether or not to support it (i.e., whether the U.S. would continue to fund the *contras*). Sovereign nations determine for themselves what respects their sovereignty. Obviously, the ambassador was speaking on behalf of the administration's view of U.S., not Central American, interests. And since the current U.S. policy in Nicaragua is war, our government will not support Contadora, despite our growing international isolation on that position, so there will continue to be war. Unless, of course, Congress refuses to pay for it.

PHILIP McMANUS

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Of several minds: John Garvey

MORE THAN SENTIMENT

THE LANGUAGES OF LOVE

THE WORD "love" is like some other important words (faith, trust, hope, care, wisdom, good, knowledge) in having a wide range of uses, extending from the most trivial areas of life to the most essential. You can trust that a certain toothpaste will do the job, and you can trust a friend. It isn't wise to park in a place where you might get a ticket, but this isn't what Plato

meant by wisdom. A béarnaise sauce done in just the right way is good, and so is a saint. This broad territory with fuzzy edges, this plain across which a word can wander without being lost, is necessary. The point may be difficult to accept for those philosophers of language who really should have become accountants, who turn to philosophy and insist on a word meaning exactly one thing, or if not

one thing one list of things which can't move beyond boundaries with clear limits.

But a language is not a series of definitions so much as it is a series of gestures and a set of associations. A word like "love" is important precisely because it has such a multivalent use, and we would not be better off if the word could not encompass a love for chocolate and a love for one's children. In its roots in almost every language the word has to do with desire. In Spanish a word frequently translated as *love* really means *want* or *desire*, and although Greek has a theologically useful distinction between *eros* and *agape*, the ways we talk about love — whatever it means — vary so widely at times that we ought to look at them with some concern.

As Christians, we speak of God as love and say that those who abide in love abide in God. Here we obviously can't include very possible reach of the word, from the love someone talks about when he says he loves pizza to the love which is equivalent to lust, as in "love-goddess." To say that God is love and that we must love one another means something more than strong affection and attraction, even something more than commitment, as welcome as that idea is.

Christianity deals with incarnation — the Word made flesh — and with transfiguration — the flesh deified. That deification is shown to us in the revelation of the uncreated light of Mount Tabor and in the mysterious appearance of Christ as a stranger to Mary Magdalene in the garden after his Resurrection, and to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, and to those he served when he made breakfast for them and they did not dare to ask who he was. It seems to be essential in John's Gospel that Jesus appears as a stranger. God becomes human, takes on all the significance we ourselves give to what it means to be human. Jesus suffers, after being born into a family, as all of us are. He dies, and before his death his soul is "filled with dismay and dread." If we were to stop at this point with our consideration of what it means to be human we would already have a strong story.

But loving and living and dying take on new significance in Christ. Christianity found the word "love" and transformed it, found it as God found the flesh that was there, the kind we have, the kind

God gave us. It is a word which is limited not only by what it can mean in theory but by how we, limited and dimmed ourselves by original sin, invariably do tend to mean it.

By showing us something we could not have seen without him Christ has made the word "love" what it was not, and could not have been, without him. Love without Christ could not have meant "regard me as I regard you" — when that regard means a love willing to die for the other, an emptying even of the self, which under all previous definitions of love had to do with the pleasing of the self and the satisfaction of desire. A love which means the emptying of everything that can receive love is paradoxical — except where it exists in practice and can be seen to bear fruit in the flesh. So we return, through transfiguration, to the most radical incarnation.

The thing Christians must hear and learn before they can pretend to teach it is what love means, in the new light of the transfiguration of the ordinary language we use about love. This word may in its roots mean desire, but because of Christ it has been thrown into relief by a new light which shines behind it. If we do not understand the transformation of the word we use about our relationship to our wives, husbands, children, and friends and, most difficult of all, enemies, we will be likely to accept the culture's thin and sentimental use of the word "love," a use which makes its emotional component much too important.

The work of Christianity often seems to be to take a word or an idea and to turn

it inside out. God so loved the world that he gave it his son, who was murdered for us, and whose love consisted in showing us at once an emptying and a transfiguration of the ordinary ways we think of love and self-satisfaction. There is what seems to be a deliberate upsetting of the categories we find important, and a joy beneath and behind all of it, in God's will for us. If we need a wide and sloppy use of words like "love" to be able to talk at all, we also need Christ's central and transforming example of love to keep our notions of love from being sentimental.

Our desire for God is part of what love means in this context, but God's desire for us is much more impressive, and unlimited, and it is a form of help which makes the word *help* seem very small. It is help we are given on our terms, and it brings us forward into places we cannot really imagine.

Think of what the Eucharist means: God gives us grain and grapes, and through our labors we make these into bread and wine, food we need and enjoy; we return it as thanks to God in the form of bread and wine, and receive it back as Christ's presence. This give and take is one in which God is able to give us not only what we need, but more than we could have imagined we could give or receive. God calls us forth from nothing, gives us the ability to work with him and take such basic and wonderful things as bread and wine from the surface of a world we are very lucky to live on. Our return of those blessings to him is given back to us as the Eucharist.

To have been called forth from nothing and given the fullness of divine life means that we are given life so fully, so completely, that there is literally nothing more we can do. We have only to accept it and try to live the consequences of what should be a radical gratitude. Despite everything we are given, moment to moment (Caussade uses the wonderful phrase, "the sacrament of the present moment"), we are cold-hearted, half-attentive at best, and bored. There really is no greater tragedy than our ability to be indifferent before what we have been given, and no better proof of original sin's real effect. It is a kind of fear.

JOHN GARVEY



THE BOOK OF WISDOM says there is a season for all things. It would appear that the spring is the season when statements blossom on nuclear policy. In May 1983, the Catholic Bishops issued their pastoral on nuclear policy. It was also in the spring of 1983 that President Reagan opened a new chapter in the strategic policy debate with his proposal for the Strategic Defense Initiative, aimed at rendering nuclear weapons "impotent and obsolete." May 1986 began with the pastoral letter of the United Methodist Bishops asserting that the policy of deterrence should not receive the blessing of the church, and it closed with the Reagan administration announcing that the United States does not plan to abide by the criteria of the unratified SALT II agreement.

Careful observers of the nuclear debate raise questions about how the administration's policy of the 1980s for greatly enhancing the offensive elements of the U.S. deterrent relate to the president's push to move away from offensive forces, and how either objective is served by the U.S. discarding the SALT II limits. Other observers ask how the moral assessment of the Catholic bishops relates to the moral conclusions of the Methodist bishops and where the new committee of the USCC, constituted to assess the conditional acceptance of deterrence, will move. These questions are not easily answered in a column, but they do illustrate that the debate about the future of deterrence in its strategic and moral dimensions is headed into a new phase. We may well be entering a period which will resemble the late 1950s as a time of fundamental conceptual development about nuclear policy.

My purpose here is limited to recommending a sterling resource for the analysis of morality and strategy. It is Joseph Nye's new book appropriately entitled *Nuclear Ethics* (The Free Press, \$14.95). The book is important because of who Nye is, what he says, and where his work fits in the ethics and strategy debate. Nye has been at the

Church/world watch

Nuclear ethics: for strategists & policymakers

J. Bryan Hehir

center of nuclear strategy as an academic analyst and an actor in the policy process. He is a Professor of Government at Harvard, and he served as Deputy Under Secretary of State in the Carter Administration with special responsibility for non-proliferation policy. He is a co-author of the Harvard study *Living with Nuclear Weapons* and a subsequent study *Hawks, Doves and Owls: An Agenda for Avoiding Nuclear War*. These credentials establish his status in the secular policy debate, but the interesting feature of this book is the way he has systematically outlined and entered the ethical argument. Twenty years ago the moral questions about nuclear policy were no less urgent, but, no one with Nye's policy background engaged the ethics and policy debate in a book-length study. It is a sign of how the public debate has shifted that the ethical question now engages policy analysts with this seriousness.

More significant, of course, is the style and substance of Nye's argument. The growing saliency of "the moral factor" has produced a number of arguments about the moral quality of different strategic proposals. The moral conclusions run in very different directions. The value of Nye's book lies first in the way he establishes a framework for assessing the spectrum of moral arguments. The first half of the book is an essay about moral reasoning. Nye has not retreated from the unenviable task of probing the logic of consequentialist arguments vs. deontologi-

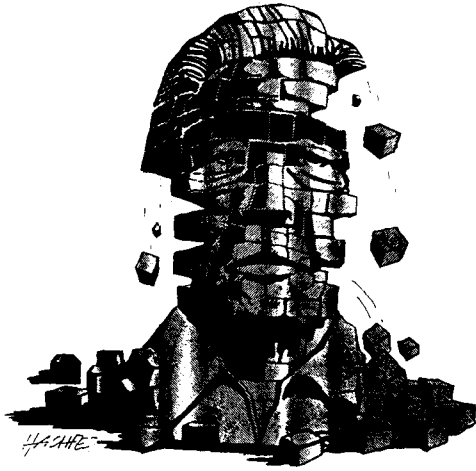
cal principles, of pursuing both philosophical and theological assessments of the nuclear dilemma, and, finally, of formulating his own grid for assessing policy in terms of "motives, means, and consequences." He hews a complex line, balancing the rigorous theoretical logic of the moralists and the often less than logical choices which face policymakers. He refuses to let either side off easily, pressing the architects of moral principle about the consequences of adhering absolutely to the logic of principle, and criticizing those in the policy community who think one can override the claims of moral principles with easy appeals to "realism."

If Nye had only written the first half of *Nuclear Ethics* it would have been a distinct service in disciplining the debate between ethicists and strategists, between the citizens' questions and the policymakers' explanations. But he moves beyond analysis and critique of the arguments of others to his recommendations for shaping nuclear policy in a strategically coherent and morally justifiable manner. His "Five Maxims of Nuclear Ethics" are: (1) self-defense in a just but limited cause (i.e., it can justify a deterrence policy but not every deterrence policy); (2) never treat nuclear weapons as normal weapons; (3) minimize harm to innocent people; (4) reduce risks of nuclear war in the near term; and (5) reduce reliance on nuclear weapons over time.

Nye plays out the implications of each principle in a manner which cannot be duplicated here. The scope of what he attempts guarantees him plenty of critics, but the standard of argument he sets will make criticism a demanding task. I find myself persuaded by the basic thrust of Nye's position, while registering disagreements at the margin.

Particularly important are Nye's second and third maxims. It is easy to agree in principle that nuclear weapons are not like other weapons, but shaping policy which reflects this qualitative

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The precarious road

PEGGY ROSENTHAL

DURING FEBRUARY of this year, spectators around the world watched nonviolence at work in the Philippines: on television we saw masses of unarmed people blocking tanks, soldiers accepting flowers from nuns, military and church leaders urging soldiers to refuse orders to shoot their fellow citizens. And soon we saw that nonviolence had indeed worked. With almost no bloodshed, and none caused by the opposition, a dictator was forced from power and the popularly elected choice became president. In one particular instance, we actually saw nonviolence succeed.

But how *did* it work? What were the dynamics of this powerful force for overcoming oppression? What steps of preparation made the success possible? What went on behind the scenes we saw? Can it last?

Someone uniquely qualified to answer these questions is Hildegard Goss-Mayr. She and her husband, Jean Goss, were in Manila during the first two weeks of February, meeting for regular strategy sessions with Mrs. Aquino and Cardinal Sin. They were also in the country in 1984, teaching active nonviolence to Filipinos who in turn undertook a nation-wide education program in nonviolent action. Beyond their experience in the Philippines, for over twenty years the Goss-Mayrs have initiated and participated in nonviolent liberation struggles in Latin America and elsewhere.

Jean Goss was born in France in 1912. Hildegard Mayr was born in Austria in 1930, the daughter of a founder of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR). After their marriage in 1958, they went as representatives of IFOR to several Eastern Bloc countries. They lobbied at the Second Vatican Council for an endorsement of nonviolent peacemaking, and succeeded in getting the first official church support of conscientious objection written into *Gaudium et Spes*. They spent most of 1962 to 1977 in Latin America, sent by the IFOR to teach nonviolence as a revolutionary force. Their influence

on the nonviolent liberation movement in Latin America is indisputable: two of the movement's leaders, Dom Helder Camara and Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel, attribute their understanding of nonviolence to personal encounters with the Goss-Mayrs.

It was because of their Latin American experience that the Goss-Mayrs were invited to the Philippines in 1984 to help develop a nonviolent opposition to Marcos. But this development is best described in Hildegard Goss-Mayr's own words. I was privileged to hear her talk and to interview her last April at a retreat in Groton, Massachusetts. The quotes that follow are from that occasion.

Hildegard — everyone calls her by her first name — agrees with other commentators that the public drama of mass nonviolent resistance to Marcos began in August 1983 with the spontaneous demonstrations of outrage at Benigno Aquino's assassination. But "it is not so well known," she says, that behind this event lay a decisive private drama: "Ninoy Aquino, while he was in prison, underwent a radical change — a kind of conversion" to nonviolence. When first imprisoned by Marcos, Aquino "was an opposition politician, certainly an honest person, but, like all politicians, trying to get power." Through reading the Gospel and Gandhi while suffering the conditions of imprisonment, he came to see "that to be a politician does not mean to try to get quickly as much power as you can, but it means to serve the people" at whatever cost to oneself.

Ninoy Aquino knew, when he decided in 1983 to return from the United States to the Philippines, that the cost might be his life. But "this gift of the life of Ninoy," as Hildegard puts it, was "the blood of the martyr" that bears fruit: it "encouraged thousands and thousands of others to overthrow the fear that had kept them passive, and to come out on the streets to demand that martial law be discontinued and human rights be respected."

The immediate result of these spontaneous mass demonstrations in the autumn of 1983 was, however, further repression by Marcos, as well as further strengthening of the Communist New People's Army (NPA), whose counterviolence offered

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the most powerful and organized opposition to the government's injustice. It was into this situation of polarized violence that Hildegard and Jean Goss-Mayr were invited to come by some Filipino religious communities who saw the urgent need for a well-organized nation-wide nonviolent campaign.

THE GOSS-MAYRS arrived in the Philippines in February 1984. After traveling around the country, they concluded "that it was very late to come into the situation with nonviolence," because of the deeply entrenched violence on both sides:

We felt it was late, but we felt on the other hand that there were people really searching for the nonviolent alternative. And I think one thing that made us decide to accept this challenge was when, on the last day that we spent on this first visit, the brother of Ninoy Aquino came to see us. He was one of those who had been organizing these demonstrations after the assassination of his brother. And he said to Jean and myself: "A few days ago the arms merchants visited us and said to us, 'Do you think that with a few demonstrations you will be able to overthrow this regime? Don't you think you need better weapons than that? We offer them to you. Make up your mind.' " And then he said, "You see it is providential that you have come just at this point of time, because ever since this visit I am unable to sleep. Do I have the right to throw our country into major civil war? What is my responsibility as a Christian politician in this situation? Is there really such a thing as nonviolent combat against an unjust system like that of Marcos?"

So Jean and I said, "At least you could try. You don't lose anything if you try with nonviolence. But *you* must make up your mind, and if you do, you must *prepare* yourself for nonviolent resistance. Nonviolence is not something that you do spontaneously and without preparation. No — you have to prepare yourself inwardly, because nonviolent methods are the fruit of a vision of man that we have. If you want to have seminars of preparation, let us know, and we are willing to come back."

A few weeks later the Goss-Mayrs were invited back. They returned that summer for six weeks, giving seminars on nonviolent liberation to a variety of people: peasants, political opposition leaders, labor union leaders, bishops, churchworkers, including nuns and priests and laypeople. In all these seminars, as in the ones the Goss-Mayrs have led throughout the world, the focus was two-fold: analysis of the structures of oppression, and personal spiritual conversion. The violence in society and the violence in our own hearts cannot, the Goss-Mayrs insist, be separated.

An incident at one of the seminars shows the dynamics of spiritual conversion at work in political reconciliation. Among the seminar participants were political opposition leaders and also peasant leaders:

the peasants would not speak with the politicians. They said, "We have no faith in the politicians. Even if they

are from the opposition, they have betrayed us so often, we have no faith." The people were very divided. One group would not relate to the other. So one evening when we celebrated the Eucharist together, Father Blanco, a Jesuit priest, distributed the host immediately after the consecration. Everybody held the host, consecrated, right in his hand. And Father Blanco said, "Now, this host is bread. This body of Christ is our bread. This love of His — how do we live up to it? Let us now break this bread that we have in our hand, and bring one part of the host to those with whom we have not yet spoken in our seminar." And we experienced that the peasants would bring the host to the politicians, and politicians to the peasants. And we saw leaders from the labor unions with 400,000 members breaking down in tears, because they said, "So far we have only been educating the workers in polarization, and not in a work to overcome really the injustice — in the hearts and minds of those who carry responsibility." These seminars were not just training people in a methodology. But they really meant for each one of us a deep change, a conversion.

After the Goss-Mayrs completed their six weeks of seminars, an American, Richard Deats, Interfaith Director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), went to the Philippines to lead three more weeks of nonviolent training sessions. Deats, a Methodist who had taught social ethics at Union Theological Seminary in the Philippines for thirteen years, focused his workshops on the Filipino Protestant community, since the Goss-Mayrs had worked primarily with Catholics. Out of the nine weeks of FOR seminars, AKKAPKA — the nonviolent movement of the Philippines — was formed. Under the energetic leadership of Father Blanco and a staff that soon grew to nine, AKKAPKA set right to work on building base communities and on giving in-depth seminars on active nonviolence to key groups of people around the country. Forty such seminars were held in thirty provinces during AKKAPKA's first year (autumn 1984-85).

Then when Marcos, at the end of 1985, unexpectedly announced the "snap" election for February 7, 1986, AKKAPKA changed its strategy. Discontinuing the general nonviolent education seminars, it concentrated on three projects: encouraging people to vote from their consciences, without fear and without accepting bribes; helping to train people in nonviolent defense of the ballot boxes (half a million people were in fact trained, and did defend the boxes without weapons when Marcos's forces tried to steal them); and setting up "Tent Cities," tents for prayer and fasting and nonviolent training located in ten highly populated areas.

The Tent Cities operated from mid-January until the end of the election crisis, so Hildegard Goss-Mayr was able to observe them when she returned to the Philippines at the beginning of February. Her assessment is that they were instrumental in the eventual success of the nonviolent campaign:

One tent was set up right in the banking center in Manila, where the financial power of the regime was concentrated. There in a little park, this big prayer tent

was set up. And around this prayer tent, people who promised to fast and pray would, day and night, have a presence and carry within the fast and with the prayer the whole revolutionary process. And I think we cannot emphasize this enough: that in this whole process, there was always this unity — of outward nonviolent action against the unjust regime and of that deep spirituality that gave the people the strength later on to stand up against the tanks and to confront the tanks — this force of fasting and prayer. And in the celebrations of the Eucharist, they would point out that we are not fighting only against flesh and blood, we are fighting against the demons of richness and exploitation and hatred that we have to cast out from our people — from ourselves, from the military, from Marcos and his followers. And that we must use this arm together with the organized nonviolent resistance.

... I think it makes a great difference, where in a revolutionary process, where people are emotionally very, very taken in, as you can understand — whether you promote hatred and revenge, or whether you help the people to stand firmly for justice but at the same time not to let themselves be taken in by the hatred of those who stand with the oppressor: not to become like the oppressor, but to stand for justice and to love your enemy to the extent that you *want* to liberate him, you want to win him, you want to draw him in, and you don't want his destruction but his liberation.

This message being delivered in the prayer tents was simultaneously being communicated by the Catholic radio station, Radio Veritas, which played an indispensable role in the nonviolent campaign. Not only did Radio Veritas coordinate the whole resistance, broadcasting continual reports of what was happening, but around the clock it also read passages of Martin Luther King, Jr., the Sermon on the Mount, and Gandhi, urging people to follow these examples.

While this public education in — and practice of — nonviolence was going on at prayer tents and over the radio, Mrs. Aquino and Cardinal Sin and the Goss-Mayrs were meeting privately to prepare “scenarios” of nonviolent response to various possibilities that might develop. “And the scenario of which everybody was most afraid,” Hildegard says, “was that the army would split. . . . Then a great deal of bloodshed could be foreseen.” In fact the army did split, and “Marcos did give the order to those who were still loyal to him to crush the dissident part of the army.” But because Aquino and her advisors had prepared themselves for this possibility, they were ready with their response:

Radio Veritas immediately called people to fill up the street, to stand in front of the tanks, to speak to the soldiers. And for journalists to take films of those soldiers who would shoot on the people. No soldier wants to see a film in which his face is personally shown shooting on the people. And there were few in the beginning. But more and more and more, and finally you know there were several hundred thousand, who spent a

whole weekend in the road blocking the tanks so that they could not move into the dissident groups — speaking to the soldiers and saying, “You are one of us; you belong to the people; come back to the group to whom you really belong.”

These are the scenes of mass nonviolent action that we all saw. As crowd scenes, they were the most dramatic. But in the preceding weeks we had also watched other actors playing leading roles in the developing drama: Mrs. Aquino calling in campaign speeches for reconciliation instead of revenge; the



Catholic Bishops' Conference issuing two crucial statements, one (on January 26) just before the election and one (on February 14) just after it, condemning the government's cheating as a “conspiracy of evil” and endorsing “the nonviolent struggle for justice” as the way to resist this evil “by peaceful means — in the manner of Christ.” And just as behind the nonviolent people's power lay AKKAPKA's preparatory work, behind both Mrs. Aquino's and the bishops' calls for active nonviolence lay years of preparation and growing commitment.

MRS. AQUINO's commitment to nonviolence came out of personal suffering. According to Richard Deats, during the seven years of her husband's imprisonment she shared fully in his “dark night of the soul”; and “that tremendous encounter with suffering and oppression and finally assassination” gave her a deep identification with the Filipino people in their suffering under Marcos. Hildegard agrees: “Cory was not a person who wanted to be president, who wanted to have power, who wanted to make herself the first person in the nation. She's very authentic in that sense: that when she accepted, under the pressure of the people, under the demand of the church, to be a candidate for president, she did it because she knew she had to *serve* the people.”

The story behind the bishops' dramatic election-crisis endorsement of nonviolent action is longer. It begins with Francisco Claver, S.J., who — as Bishop of Bukidnon in the 1970s — became committed to active nonviolence as the only legitimate Christian response to the violence of both the government and the NPA. Claver gradually gathered a growing number of like-minded bishops, who for fifteen years have been reflecting together on how to help their people in the light of the Gospel, studying the responses of bishops in comparable

places like Brazil, and encouraging specific acts of nonviolent resistance in their dioceses when faced with government harassment and killings. Claver's group numbered between twenty and thirty (out of a Bishops' Conference of 104) by the time he brought them to meet with the Goss-Mayrs in 1984 and then again with Richard Deats in 1985. Under the influence of Claver's group, the Bishops' Conference of the Philippines issued increasingly strong statements against government oppression in the last few years. Their election statements are "not the first," says Hildegard approvingly. "There has been a process going on, similar to what happened in some Latin American countries, that a few bishops understand [non-violence] and they believe that their brothers in Christ can understand also, if they witness."

This picture of the Filipino bishops gradually converting each other to active nonviolence over the years, combined with the visibly effective actions of the church hierarchy during the crisis (Cardinal Sin's Victory Mass for Mrs. Aquino, priests in all the churches reading from the pulpit the bishops' call for mass resistance), makes it look as if the leading role in the successful nonviolent liberation was played by the hierarchy rather than by the people. Yet Mrs. Aquino's celebration speeches attributed the success to "people's power." The question of who, behind the scenes, was the greater force on whom — the people or the church hierarchy — is a matter of interpretation; and Hildegard Goss-Mayr's view is complex. She sees Bishop Claver ("certainly one of the pillars of non-violence") as a major force. And she appreciates the historic significance of the bishops' February 14 letter: "I think it is the first time, at least in present history, that a bishops' conference in writing asked people to go into nonviolent action and into civil disobedience as the way that the Gospel proposes to us in order to overcome the unjust system." But while stressing that "it was very important that in this last phase the church as an institution, the bishops, gave its full support to the nonviolent struggle," she sees the direction of influence precisely that way: the bishops giving *support* to a struggle *already* in process, "approving what the people had already lived." With a laugh she adds, "I think it is the people who converted the bishops!"

Although she enjoys this picture of conversion from the bottom up, Hildegard Goss-Mayr also sees its serious implications. Her voice sounds pained when she criticizes the church for not taking the lead in defense of human rights during the early years of martial law. "A small part of the church" did stand from the beginning "on the side of the people and work for social justice. . . . But the majority of the church leadership and of the middle class people were linked to the regime. And I think we must be truthful and say that it was similar to Latin America: that the church as an official institution was for too long — for much too long — linked to those in power." Much of the responsibility for the growth of the NPA lies, she insists sadly, with "the cowardice of large sections of the official church. People cannot remain passive under certain circumstances. And wherever the moral authorities, whether it is the Christian churches or other moral authorities, do not give a

lead in a nonviolent resistance," people "will have to take counterviolence."

The church, then, bears some blame for the polarized violence which made the Goss-Mayrs pessimistic in 1984 about the possibilities of nonviolence. And even now, while Hildegard rejoices in what the Filipino church and people were able to do together through "the transforming power of non-violence," her initial concerns remain. "There is as yet not enough preparation. . . . You cannot say that the whole nation is educated in nonviolence."

In her concern about the continued precariousness of the situation, Hildegard is careful about the language she uses in referring to the February drama. Bishop Claver, in recent articles in *America*, has called it "the February revolution." When I asked Richard Deats whether he thought "revolution" was an accurate term, he made a useful distinction: yes, he said, "in the sense that a revolution is a rapid change, a rapid turnover, and what happened was that a twenty-year reign of a dictator was ended." But "it is not a thorough, complete revolution in the sense of a total transformation of society. What is before us now is the second phase: addressing the deep social and economic problems such as the landlessness and the deep poverty." Hildegard Goss-Mayr's assessment is equally cautious. While believing firmly in nonviolence as a revolutionary force, and referring often to "the revolutionary process" in the Philippines, she calls the February events "the recent liberation struggle." And even that phrase she repeatedly qualifies by insisting that it was "only a first step":

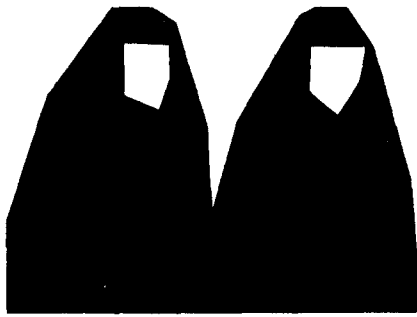
What is before the Filipino people now is at least as difficult, if not more difficult. Because it will need perseverance. And it will need a continued conversion of those who still adhere to the old regime, who still have important places in the provinces: to dismantle the private armies of the landlords; to carry out a land reform so that the mass of the people can live in dignity on the land; to negotiate with the Moslem minority; to negotiate with the NPA, so that perhaps they will be willing to put down their arms and to become one of the democratic parties in the country; to rebuild the economy of the country. Many very difficult steps.

Le Roy Smith, Jr.

Solo flight from base

My world and I do not agree
on what is good or just or fair—
which leaves me over open sea
amongst the downdraughts of despair

For everyone prefers his own,
sharing their constructs and their dreams;
but always some must fly alone.
since truth abhors, yet breeds, extremes.



CARMELITE MONASTERY AT AUSCHWITZ

Contemplation & controversy

EVA FLEISCHNER

SINCE 1984 a small group of Polish Carmelite nuns has been living in a former theater just outside the camp of Auschwitz. During the war the building had been used by the SS to store soap and cyclon B gas. What attracted attention to the Carmelite foundation was a 1985 fund-raising campaign by a Belgian Catholic group called "Aid to the Church in Distress," to renovate and enlarge the convent. The fund-raising literature referred to the convent as a "witness to the victorious power of the cross of Jesus," "a spiritual fortress and guarantee of the conversion of our strayed brothers." Jewish groups began protesting the establishment of the convent last October in an article that appeared in *Le Soir*, a Belgian daily. They were soon joined by Catholics in France and Belgium.

The Carmelites themselves have stated their intention in these words: "We perform a symbolic gesture. We seek to do penance, for it is up to Christians to expiate the evil perpetrated by other Christians, some of whom had become atheists, in a Christian land."

Why would anyone find fault with this desire for prayer and expiation? Why the "furor" over this convent? A look at some of the major responses may provide clues to the conflict and, perhaps, suggest a resolution.

Let us first look at responses that date from what might be called the initial stage, up to March 1986.

Cardinal Decourtray of Lyon, in a radio interview of December 6, 1985, expressed the hope that "the rumors . . . are without foundation." The cardinal said: "For me, the Nazi savagery which descended on Auschwitz was aimed in the first place at the Jewish people, even though there were non-Jewish victims at Auschwitz. . . . In my view, Auschwitz is the symbol of the attempt at the total extermination of the Jews. . . ."

On December 12, six prominent French Catholics wrote in *Le Monde*: "... this news is at first sight profoundly disturb-

ing. Is it sign or counter-sign? If Nazi barbarism was directed in this place against many men, women, and children who were not all Jews, it is a fact that the camp Auschwitz-Birkenau has become for the world, and will remain in history, the supreme place of witness of the Shoah [*Shoah*, Hebrew for "catastrophe," is being used more and more today in place of "Holocaust," which through overuse has been emptied of its meaning], that is to say, of the attempted extermination of the Jews because they were Jews." The signers called upon Christians to engage in "a moral reflection about the Shoah" and to seek genuine dialogue with Jews.

In a letter to her congregation of March 19, 1986, Sister Katherine MacDonald, Superior General of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion, wrote:

... no one is opposed to prayer, much less to prayer at Auschwitz. However, the project seems to indicate a total lack of awareness of what Auschwitz is for the Jewish people. It is surely worrying that it does not seem to have occurred to the Carmelite sisters, or to local authorities, to seek out Jewish feeling about this foundation. Auschwitz has become the symbol of the greatest catastrophe in Jewish history, perhaps of the greatest evil ever perpetrated in Europe . . . we cannot but empathize with the feelings of most of the Jewish community who find it intolerable that a large convent and cross should be erected on what they hold as a "holy place" their memorial to the tragic annihilation of six million Jewish people. . . .

Jewish opposition, not surprisingly, has been no less emphatic. The World Jewish Congress passed a resolution on January 30, 1986 in which it urged the Carmelites not to build a convent at Auschwitz: "No one group or faith should establish itself on this ground. Such an action, however well-intentioned, would create profound anguish, misunderstanding, resentment, at a place that for the Jewish people will forever symbolize the tragedy of the Shoah. . . ."

On March 13, the Representative Council of the Jewish Institutions of France addressed a letter to the Apostolic Nuncio in Paris, which said in part: "Others, we know, have suffered, were killed and murdered there by the Nazis. But it is the immense martyrdom of the Jews which has marked this place with the sign of unspeakable suffering of men, women, and children who had been abandoned by humanity to the technology of industrial death. Nothing can efface the fact that

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It is a moment when we are sharply reminded of how much *Commonweal's* existence and success depend on the generosity of its supporters. Last January we published the names of over five

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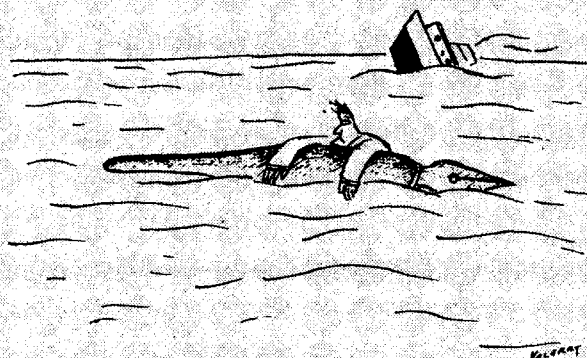
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they died there because they were Jews, and, because they were Jews, to the indifference of governments and religious hierarchies. Today they are entitled to that silence from which they suffered so deeply. . . .”

Not all voices that have spoken have protested. Some Jews do not object to the convent, on the grounds that 1.5 million non-Jews, mostly Polish Catholics, also died at Auschwitz (cf. *The Jewish Week*, and Ben Helfgott, chairman in England of Holocaust survivors). Writing in the March 4 *New York Times*, Rabbi Zalman Schachter of Temple University wrote, “It would be more constructive if the energy being used to oppose the Sisters of Carmel were invested in establishing a yeshiva (place of study) devoted to mourning, contemplation, and prayer.” Some Christians find it inspiring that the nuns will be praying for suffering humanity everywhere.

HOW does one sort it all out? It seems to me that at least three factors have contributed to the controversy.

- First, no members of the remnant of the Jewish community in Poland — nor any part of the Jewish community anywhere else — were informed, let alone consulted, with regard to the Carmelite foundation.

- Second, the language of the fund-raisers, headed by Father Winfred van Straaten, was highly objectionable. One of the flyers shows the entrance to Auschwitz, with the caption: “The gate of hell becomes the gate of heaven.” Other ill-chosen phrases have already been mentioned: the convent as “a witness to the victorious power of the cross of Jesus,” “a spiritual fortress and guarantee of the conversion of our strayed brothers.” Such triumphalism seems strangely out of place in a post-Vatican II church. Is it any wonder that Jews, and some Catholics also, are profoundly shocked?

- Finally, insensitivity to Jews. Neither the Carmelites nor the fund-raisers have shown concern for Jewish sensibilities, or comprehension of the meaning Auschwitz has for Jews. Of all the victims of Auschwitz, the Jews were unique in that they alone were marked for total extinction. One third of all the world’s Jews were murdered during the Shoah; of these, 2.5 million at Auschwitz. Auschwitz has become the symbol, more than any other camp, of the attempt to annihilate the Jewish people. (Auschwitz simply is not Dachau, which also has a Carmel, invoked recently by some in support of the Carmel at Auschwitz. Dachau was opened in April 1933, primarily for political opponents of Hitler’s regime, although Jews also were interned and died there. At Auschwitz, more than half of the four million victims were Jews.) It is this



failure to take account of the magnitude of the Jewish tragedy at Auschwitz — a lack until recently in evidence in the camp itself — that understandably aroused in Jews the fear that their suffering is being overlooked, its specificity obliterated, or simply merged in the pool of “suffering humanity” in general. Is it any wonder that some Jews are angry that, once again, their history may be “appropriated” by Christians, as happened so frequently in the early church in its interpretation of the Scriptures?

In speaking of the unique meaning Auschwitz has for Jews, care should be taken not to denigrate the fate suffered by non-Jewish victims of the Nazis, of whom more than one million also perished at Auschwitz. The Nazi attack on the Polish people was particularly brutal, clearly aimed at destroying Poland as a nation: Polish religious, political, and intellectual leaders by the thousands were systematically murdered; the rest of the population was to be enslaved. The memory of these non-Jewish victims has not always been honored sufficiently. It is not surprising that, particularly in the United States with its large Polish-American population, accusations have been heard that the suffering of the Poles has been overlooked. This shows another kind of insensitivity, and efforts to overcome it should be intensified. Insensitivity toward one group does not, however, make up for insensitivity toward another.

The crux of the difficulty, in my view, has been an absence of listening, or at least of hearing. Two developments in recent weeks offer hope that this situation is beginning to change.

- First, Auschwitz is situated in the diocese of Cardinal Franciscus Macharski, Archbishop of Cracow. On March 10, 1986, Doctor Victor Goldbloom, president of the International Conference of Christians and Jews, addressed a letter to the cardinal on behalf of the ICCJ. In it he expressed the organization’s concern at the omission of any mention of the Jewish victims of Auschwitz, and at reports that the present convent would be replaced by a larger, more obtrusive building.

Cardinal Macharski responded to Dr. Goldbloom on April 3 in detail, assuring him that the convent would remain small (“It is not the camp that exists in the shadow of the Carmel, but rather the Carmel that lives in the shadow of the camp”). In founding the convent, the cardinal wrote, “We wanted only to set a sign . . . a living spiritual sign . . . a living monument of expiation for crimes done by men in the past, men among whom there were also those who had been Christians before they embraced Nazi ideology.” Cardinal Macharski concluded by warmly inviting Jews to establish their own oratory [sic] at Auschwitz.

The cardinal’s letter will not satisfy those who wonder whether it is appropriate for a church that remained so largely silent during the Shoah to establish a convent at Auschwitz forty-five years later. It should also be remembered that many of the criminals continued to call themselves Christians throughout the Shoah. Be that as it may, the cardinal’s letter is warm and sensitive in tone, beyond doubt a genuine attempt to respond to Jewish concerns.

- Second, talks have been held recently between church

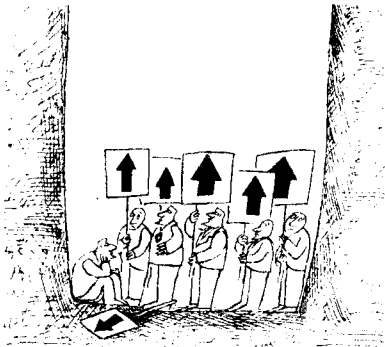
leaders and theologians about the possibility of setting up an international commission to deal with the Carmelite foundation at Auschwitz. Such a commission would include Jewish members.

This proposal, like Cardinal Macharski's letter, is evidence of a new and welcome sensitivity on the part of church leaders. Had such sensitivity been present from the first, the "furor" might never have erupted. Perhaps it can yet be laid to rest, if Jews are listened to and involved in future discussions.

One can only wish that it may be so. No one questions the good intentions of the Carmelite nuns. But good intentions alone are not enough — certainly not between Jews and Christians in our post-Auschwitz world. We must learn to know and

understand each other. Perhaps for both Jews and Christians a beginning would be to bring forth from their inmost spirits a response to Abraham Joshua Heschel's question: "How can you say you love me if you don't know what hurts me?" And certainly every serious Christian can find within her or himself an Amen to this conviction expressed by Sister Katherine MacDonald: "... together, we can bring this whole affair before God, praying that a solution may be found without confrontation, without detriment to Christian relations with the Jewish people, without further offense or anguish to those who have already suffered too much. ... Perhaps then we Christians may dare to ask the trust of Jews and become credible witness to expiation, prayer, and reconciliation."

MISGIVINGS, FASHION, & PROTEST



A witness to the world

T.R. HEALY

There you are, in the dark, cushioned space that exactly fits you, with yards of blubber between yourself and reality, able to keep up an attitude of the completest indifference, no matter what happens.

George Orwell
Inside the Whale

OVER A YEAR and a half ago, Americans began to assemble outside the South African embassy in Washington, D.C. to demand that the Pretoria government dismantle its system of apartheid. They would not go away. Day after day they came to protest. Sometimes they would stand in silence. Sometimes they would pace back and forth chanting their grievances. Sometimes they would light candles or hold placards with photographs of the victims of apartheid. By the end of the first year, over three thousand protesters had been arrested, ordered to pay fines, or sentenced to short periods of confinement. But still they would not go away, eventually forming one of the longest continuous political demonstrations in American history.

Throughout most of that first year of the protest, I resided in Washington, D.C. I never joined the protesters outside the South African embassy, and I realize now I was wrong. But at the time I believed the protesters were wrong. Specifically, I had three objections to their protest.

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First of all, I regarded it as meaningless, an exercise in futility. I was convinced that such a protest, despite its notoriety and duration, would have slight impact on the policies of the government in South Africa. No doubt the leaders in Pretoria were, initially, oblivious to the cluster of Americans who protested outside their embassy in Washington every weekday. And if they regarded them at all, surely, it was as misguided zealots or inveterate revolutionaries who were absolutely opposed to the continuation of their authority in South Africa. These protests from abroad did not disturb the leaders in Pretoria who, like all authoritarians, are concerned only with the actual military strength of their opposition. The protest was futile. It lacked credible foundation. It could never seriously influence decisions made in Pretoria.

A further objection concerned my skepticism regarding civil disobedience in a democratic society. To be sure, the protesters had the right to denounce the ignominious policies of the South African regime. But this did not excuse their violation of American law. The protesters maintained they had the right to violate American law so long as they were prepared to suffer the penalties for their transgressions. To believe this is tantamount to permitting any act of lawlessness, irrespective of the harm or damage it causes others, provided that the transgressor is willing to accept the consequences of his or her violation. Civil disobedience, condoned on this basis in a democratic society, denies the authority of the law in itself, apart from the sanctions established against its violation, and, might extend the privilege of lawbreaking to those affluent members of society who are most able to afford to suffer the penalties. But the law is an intricate web, designed to hold

together disparate and conflicting people and convictions. In a democratic society, especially, the law must be respected and upheld, and any attempt to violate it is to be resisted. Even if the lawbreaker is willing to accept the penalty meted out for an infraction, this does not remove her or his obligation to uphold the law.

A third, if less substantial, objection concerned the protesters' fashionableness. In a matter of days, the small protest was transformed into the kind of theatrical spectacle that has become all too familiar in American politics. The gleaming lights of television cameras quickly shone on the protest, the droning voices of commentators benignly explained all the ramifications, political celebrities hurriedly arrived to be numbered in the protest for an afternoon, followed by other celebrities for other afternoons. All of a sudden, the protest seemed to have a life of its own. I heard the same voices making all the same demands. I saw the same faces, ingrained with the complacency of those who have been here time and again. I recognized the smugness in their eyes. And I turned away, knowing I did not wish to be part of the spectacle.

Despite the brutality of apartheid, I resolutely declined to join the protesters. I never tried to persuade others to adopt my position. But I was convinced I was correct. Months later, after large segments of South Africa's blacks had met increasing repression and violence protesting the conditions in their fissiparous society, I remained adamant in my refusal to support the American protest. At times, when I began to have doubts about my position, I would recall the observation of Pascal that the unhappiness in people arises from the fact they are unable to stay quietly in their own rooms. If the leaders in Pretoria remained in their rooms, and the American protesters in theirs, I speculated, there might be substantially less turmoil in the world. I was trying to do what I believed was right, I told myself, not what was fashionable.

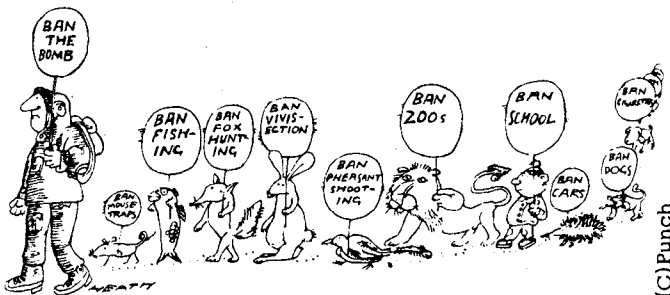
BY THE TIME I left Washington, D.C. and returned to the Pacific Northwest, I had nearly repressed the South African protest from my thoughts. I had not been back long, however, when I learned about a different sort of public demonstration in a downtown square in Seattle. This was not a protest against apartheid. In fact, it was not a political protest at all, but a theatrical spectacle, an artistic "public hanging" performed by the five-man Sankai Juku dance company of Japan. Early one afternoon last summer the company per-

formed one of its celebrated hangings before hundreds of lunchtime spectators gathered in Pioneer Square. Slowly, to the accompaniment of recorded songs of humpbacked whales, four members of the company descended upside down from the top of a six-story office building with thick ropes fastened around their ankles. They were almost naked, their bodies shaven and coated white with rice flour so that they appeared as pale as ghosts, and each one was curled into a fetus, slowly twisting in a primordial dance of birth and death. Suddenly, the rope holding one of the men snapped. To the horror of the crowd, he plunged to his instantaneous death.

I watched the event on television later that evening. Though I was as shocked as anyone by the tragic accident, I assumed I would not think anything more about it, believing I could dismiss it from my thoughts as easily as I seemed to have dismissed the protest outside the South African embassy in Washington, D.C. Yet, curiously, the image of the careening man intermittently drifted through my thoughts like a pale feather. Anxiously, I would shake my head to rattle the image loose. But it was unshakable, the ghostly man appearing to fall forever through a deep tunnel of darkness. I seemed his captive, unable to get his image out of my mind, as if somehow I had been hanging with him from my ankles wondering if I, too, might fall to my death. I was not sure why his image remained so vivid in my thoughts. But in time, I began to wonder if it might have something to do with my opposition to the protests at the South African embassy. This introduced an element of doubt with respect to my convictions on the protest issue, dislodging a large cornerstone from the wall of certitude I had erected over the past year, and threatened to collapse the entire structure. The image of the ghostly man that careened through my thoughts compelled me to reconsider my opposition to the protests at the South African embassy. Eventually it made me admit I had been in error, requiring me to sift through the rubble of my previous convictions to gather stones for a different edifice.

At first, convinced the public hanging exhibition was even more puerile and superfluous than the protests outside the South African embassy, I regarded the tragic accident of the Japanese performer as foolish, absurd, an outrage. I could not comprehend any purpose in an act so dangerous and unnecessary. I was puzzled, angry, and sought an explanation. But the more I remembered the man falling through the air, the more I seemed to become involved in his curious performance, gradually being transformed from a mere observer into a participant. This apparent involvement prompted me to recognize a certain connection between the public hanging and the apartheid protests. The business of the Sankai Juku company, according to Ushio Amagatsu, its founder and director, is to project "unerasable impressions." Gradually, I recognized that this was also the business of the protests outside the South African embassy. I realized I had never really forgotten those protests. Both they and the public hanging in Pioneer Square had created an impression that was unerasable.

To be sure, I remained sympathetic to the view that the world would be less troublesome if fewer people left the quiet



Anne Porter

The Birds of Passage

You are the one who made us
You silver all the minnows in all rivers
You wait in the deep woods
To find the new-born fox-cubs
And unseal their eyes
You shower the sky with stars

You walk alone
In the wild royal darkness
Of the heavens above the heavens
Where no one else can go.

When the fragile swallows assemble
For their pilgrimages
When the hummingbirds
Who are scarcely more
Than a glittering breath
Set out for the rain-forest
To drink from the scarlet flowers
On the other side of the world
With only now and then
The mast of a passing ship
For a resting-place and an inn

When the Canada geese
Are coming down from the north
When the storks of Europe
Stretch out their necks toward Egypt
From their nests on the chimney-tops
When shaking their big wings open
And trailing their long legs after them
They rise up heavily
To begin their autumn flight

You who speak without words
To your creatures who live without words
Are hiding under their feathers
To give them a delicate certainty
On the long dangerous night journey.

Theodore Deppe

Walking Fast

*There is indeed some light in men but let them
walk fast walk fast lest the shadows come.*

— St. Augustine

I find you on your balcony
enjoying the African sunlight — your Queen
of all colors — it pours down
on everything not covered
by your shadow.

Your eyes wander through the olive groves
marking the intricate haloing of the leaves
and their twisted trunks.

Old man, Inquisitor
and father, your yellow eyes
become the sky that lets
the twisters down:
a darkness that covered me at my birth
smothering me in the cries of unbaptized infants.
I wrestled with you as with an angel
yet sensed as you pressed me near
the storm that broke within you
with its healing rains.

You set off into the darkness at great speed.
All around you, the contours of the Empire dissolve
and the wind begins to whistle on a barren road.
I start up after you but the bandages
of my flesh unravel and tangle me.
Points of light glimmer along the darkening highway
the distant rage of great storms.
Far off I hear the first clear notes
of your singing.

of their rooms. (I agreed with Orwell that one must get inside the whale. There one has some control over what happens. There it is secure and soothing. There one is at home.) But I began to reconsider my misgivings about public protests. I had dismissed the protesters outside the South African embassy. They could march day after day but, they alone could not modify the policies in Pretoria. Similarly, four men hanging outside a building could not seriously refine the consciousness of their audience. To think otherwise was preposterous, fanning the very illusions that contribute to the danger and confusion of the world.

So I believed once. The tragic death of the Japanese performer made me appreciate the significance that certain actions may have apart from their stated objectives. He, for one, had not done something that was merely fashionable and convenient, but had risked his life to convey a personal vision of the condition of the world that was unerasable. And it was the pursuit of this vision, not his death, that made it difficult for me to sustain the objections I had to the protests outside the South African embassy. I began to consider the value of such public ceremonies to the individual protesters themselves rather than the achievement of a particular purpose. I decided that such acts define their participants. As St. Augustine indicated, in every act of knowledge we are creating ourselves. We are defined by our actions, not our silences. To take a stand anywhere is an act of personal definition.

I was wrong not to join the protesters outside the South African embassy. I may not have accomplished anything for the oppressed people of South Africa, but I might have helped to project an unerasable impression of the wickedness of apartheid, justifying my participation in the protest, as well as discovering something I had not known about myself. When others are already out in the street, tyrannically imposing their will, one should, if possible, enter those same streets to demonstrate opposition. Instead, I had remained inside the whale, registering my protest in silence, as passive as Jonah. Now I am resolved to move outside that belly of the whale, if only to move in a circle of people before a closed gate with my head raised, slowly breathing again fresh air.

Screen

BLOODY MAYHEM

'F/X,' 'GREAT WALL,' & 'TOP GUN'

ROBERT MANDEL'S *F/X* is not a summer release but a sleeper hit left over from the spring. *F/X* yields more action, adventure, thrills, and suspense than all the new season's kiddie films will probably provide combined. The strange title is movie argot for "special effects," and the plot concerns one master of the trade (played by Bryan Brown) who is contacted by the FBI's Witness Protection Program to ar-

range for a mock assassination of one of its Mafia informers. As he is invited, then hired and instructed in how to do the job, *F/X* steadily works on one's nerves to engender creepy misgivings. The first half-hour is nerve-racking.

The film is also stylishly written, acted, and directed. The screenplay abounds in wit aimed at the absurdities of sensationalist moviemaking: Brown was sought by the FBI because of his success in such (supposed) hits as *Song of the Succubus*, *Return of the Vermin*, and *I Dismember Mama*. As his actress girlfriend (Diane Venora) comments, "Nobody cares about making movies about people; all they care about is special effects." A veteran of the New York Shakespeare Festival (indeed, once its female Hamlet), Venora put so much energy into her performance — especially in one humorous, sensual exit from Brown's bed for an audition — that you know she is a marked woman. Mandel's directing expertly uses Venora's scenes to provide suspenseful alternation between a quiet, almost pastoral mood and the bloody mayhem when the fake assassination goes askew.

The second half of the film is sustained by Brian Dennehy, one of the best supporting actors in film today. Here he plays the maverick Lt. Leo McCarthy of the NYPD, Brown's unexpected ally in untangling the mess the FBI agents have created. You might think Dennehy, who grew up Irish Catholic in Brooklyn, played guard for Columbia, and served in the Marines in Vietnam, was born to play characters like McCarthy. What he does with the figure of this likable rogue (close in kind to his roles in *Never Cry Wolf*, *Foul Play*, and the soon-to-be-released *Legal Eagles*), is to individualize it, to animate the cliché with some personal, playful mischief.

The way that Dennehy uses his girth and his alert, shrewd eyes makes for a large part of the campy fear and fun that *F/X* is contrived to produce. Despite some obscurities, improbabilities, and predictable elements (chase scenes, blow-ups between the police bureaucrats and Dennehy, several false conclusions, etc.), *F/X* provides an entertaining, inventive revision of the mystery genre.

A *GREAT WALL* is the first American-made film to be shot almost entirely in the People's Republic of China, including a scene on the great wall north of Beijing. It thus has the advantage of a magnificent, inexpensive set design, and some faces and scenes photographed far more beautifully and sensitively than by visiting journalists filming documentaries. One sequence depicts Chinese musical storytelling, a centuries-old art whose antique grace has outlasted dynasties, civil wars, Red Guards, and now even Pepsi.

Fortunately, the film provides more than a scenic tour. The wall is not just star attraction but central metaphor, an expression of the divide between a native Chinese and a Chinese-American family that has taken advantage of détente to revisit its mainland relatives. Writer and director Peter Wang, who also stars as the American father, enriches his screenplay with notes on different definitions of privacy (there's no word for it in Chinese), attitudes to grief (displayed in the best scene in the film, a visit to his father's grave), and attitudes toward adoles-

cent sexuality. The last dominates much of the plot: Wang's son, a brash Californian headed for Stanford (Kelvin Han Yee) takes a strong liking to his native cousin, provoking both parental anxiety and hostility from her native boyfriend.

Wang has tried to provide some drama, mostly with the teenage soap opera and with a device from sport movies to resolve his cultural clash. The two competing teenage males have to joust out their rivalry over a ping pong table for the Beijing youth championship. This makes for some fine photography, and neatly climaxes the conflict posed by the American's brashness, but the suspense is too skimpy to make this "roots" story memorable.

No doubt Wang provided these scenes to get the film made by associating it with some recognizable genres now on the market. He previously played in *Dim Sum*, a very successful Chinese American film set in San Francisco that similarly exploited the mystery genre. But in *Dim Sum* the mystery involved the central characters and here Wang has found no way to tell the story of the adults, his main interest, in a compelling way. The dialogue is in English and Mandarin, with English subtitles, which gives some idea of its authentic texture. But *A Great Wall* lacks power.

TOP GUN is like Raw Bits, Garrison Keillor's hypothetical tough-guy breakfast cereal, which, according to advertisements on "A Prairie Home Companion," is meant for folks so special that you have to apply to eat it. The same

mood, taken seriously, dominates *Top Gun*, a film about the "right stuff" Navy pilots who cavalierly compare hi-tech F-14 dogfights to "sex in a car wreck." Only the young, lean, and macho appear in this movie: sleek Tom Cruise plays the hero; Anthony Edwards and Kelley McGillis play his friends; Val Kilmer and Whip Hubley play his rivals. Tony Scott directed; Walter Skaaren, Jack Cash, and John Epps wrote; and technical assistance was provided by the Navy and fighter pilots like Lt. Tracy "Too Cool" Skeels. Even their names seem to have gone on a diet. Watching this film, you sometimes feel you need to be at least medium cool to deserve its air-conditioning.

Top Gun melds *Rambo* and *An Officer and a Gentleman*. It lacks the former's wild sincerity and the latter's raw treatment of genuine emotional needs. It also has the defects of both films, echoing the first's jingoism and the second's already familiar passage of young male hero through love and the death of a friend to greater emotional maturity. Nevertheless, it has a kind of style, in part laughable and in part visceral. The macho strutting is absurd. The casting of sultry McGillis as a flight instructor is beyond credibility. But some powerful opening and closing action sequences catapult the viewer into flight (and a kind of exhilarated vertigo) like nothing before.

Sadly, the cinematic and aerial skills involved at the end serve some bad politics: combat between Navy fighters and Soviet MIGs, breezily passed over as an event of little note. The film will succeed, and corrupt, precisely because it so delightfully makes one an airhead. TOM O'BRIEN

REINHOLD NIEBUHR & HIS CRITICS

The need for superstars

ROBERT G. MIDDLETON

THE BIOGRAPHY of Reinhold Niebuhr by Richard Fox has had many excellent reviews in the secular and religious press. *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Biography* (Pantheon, \$19.95, 340 pp.) and the reviews it has occasioned serve a helpful purpose, reminding those influenced by Niebuhr of the debt owed to this important figure and serving, it is hoped, as an incentive for a new generation to explore the thought of a significant American theologian. Dennis McCann's review in these pages ("The Last Superstar," *Commonweal*, March 14, 1986) certainly manifests qualities of paradox and irony that were

important elements in Niebuhr's own thought.

Irony is clearly discernible in McCann's review, for if the relation between an individual and the community of faith set forth in the review had characterized Niebuhr and the Christian community of his day, there would have been no biography by Richard Fox to be reviewed by Dennis McCann. Nor, I suspect, would we have been enriched by the insights of many of the other great figures in the past.

Dennis McCann may well be right in contending that such "superstars" exacted a heavy price from those around them and paid a heavy price in their own experience. In Reinhold Niebuhr's case, I do not know enough to say what "the long-suffering women in his life" really felt about their relation to Niebuhr, nor do I know how McCann arrives at his

feeling that a man who had an extraordinary capacity for self-evaluation could have used his activities so that they "masked an unholy temptation to self-evasion. . . ." These assertions may have rootage in fact, but there is, nevertheless, a question to be faced. The question is whether, granting all this, the Christian community is the richer for the witness of Niebuhr's life. If it is indeed true that insight into spiritual reality always comes with a cost attached, it is also the case that great and creative theological ages have been those in which some persons, out of whatever tangled motivations, have been willing to pay the price.

There can be no argument with Dennis McCann's designation of Reinhold Niebuhr as a superstar. Nor can there be any dissent from the proposition that the contemporary theological scene is devoid of superstars, perhaps even of any

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stars of lesser magnitude. Surveying this theological scene, I am left with a desire, I confess, for some theological superstars to emerge and, by their presence, lift contemporary theology out of its tedium.

This is, however, precisely what Dennis McCann does not want. He sees Reinhold Niebuhr as the last of the superstars, and he has no sadness that the superstars are gone. "So I say good riddance to theological celebrities," McCann writes. "What we need are theological communities, if 'Christian realism's' vision of 'moral vocation' is to be rescued from its own distortions." What he proposes is that we get away from isolated prophets and place the task of theological reflection within nurturing communities of faith. In sentences that bring disturbing reminders of David Riesman's "other-directed man," McCann wants to get rid of the "heroic individual" and to trust the "whole community's collective struggle to bear witness to the Gospel." Grudgingly, McCann makes a place for theologians, but such beings are not to speak *to* the community; the community is to speak *through* them. In his most frightening vision, he sees theologians working through what he calls "teams," but what I fear would be committees to get the task done.

I am not making a case here for free-lance superstars who, in splendid isolation, direct their judgments and counsel to a community in which they have no stake. Such a stance is a denial of a basic ingredient of the Hebrew-Christian tradition, for that tradition has a deep and even passionate commitment to the genius of religion as a communal matter.

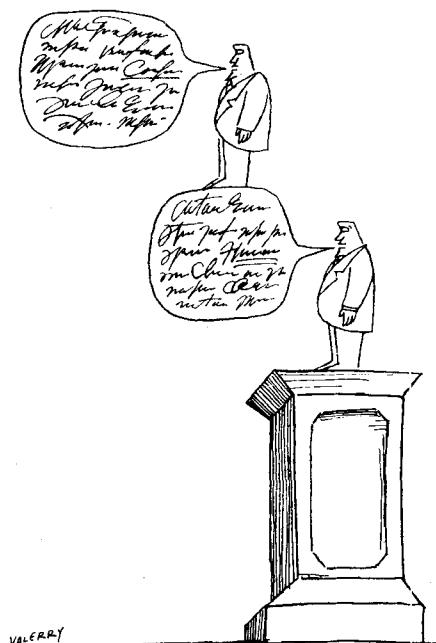
As I think of figures I would call superstars, however, a description of them as solitary individuals pursuing a purely individualistic vision of truth and justice simply does not fit. On the contrary, what precisely marks those I have in mind is responsible participation in a believing community, speaking out of the community to the community on behalf of a particular vision of truth and justice.

Who were such superstars? No two persons would agree on every detail, but Augustine, Aquinas, Francis of Assisi,

Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Kierkegaard, Newman; these (plus or minus a few) are, surely, superstars of the past. Coming closer to our era, we'd have to include Walter Rauschenbush, Baron von Hügel, Barth, Temple, the Niebuhrs, Tillich, and Hans Küng. It is my contention that, in every case, such persons functioned out of a sense of rootedness in the Christian community. They have been, in Dennis McCann's terms, "restless," with the exuberant creativity which is part of the glory of key persons in any age, but they were not, as he says of Reinhold Niebuhr, "rootless."

This is one of the important reasons why I lament instead of celebrate the passing of the superstars. We can never fathom the mystery of why such figures emerge but we can, I think, document the fact that their emergence marvelously served the Christian cause. And what is transparently clear is that in no case did they wait for the whole community to form its mind and then take it upon themselves to express that mind. They wrote, spoke, and acted; and out of their vital witness new emphases emerged and old inadequacies were exposed and overcome.

THE RELATION between especially gifted persons and the whole community is, of course, complex, but it is hardly so mysterious that we can afford to overlook the contribution of the



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superstar. As I think of Reinhold Niebuhr and the others I have cited, I see two signal contributions they have made to the Christian cause: prophesy and evangelism.

A word of prophetic judgment, directed to the religious institution, is a perennial necessity. Not always comfortable either to speak or to hear, the prophetic word is, nevertheless, the one chance the body has to avoid the ever-present temptation to invest the transient and temporal with the aura of the eternal.

It is probably safe to say that we tend to point with pride, in terms of the community's understanding of Christian mission, not to those periods devoid of superstars, but to those times when such persons have forced us out of comfortable lethargy. This requires, not so much a mouthpiece by which the community can express itself, as an independent voice, calling the community to a new awareness. This is precisely the role of prophetic leadership within the church, and the superstars I've mentioned have demonstrated this quality, correcting and enriching the total community.

In a stimulating observation about William Jennings Bryan, Richard Hofstadter provided a thoughtful insight: "Presumably he would have lost his political effectiveness if he had learned to look at his supporters with a critical eye, but his capacity for identifying himself with them was costly, for it gave them not so much leadership as expression. He spoke for them so perfectly that he never spoke to them. In his life-long stream of impassioned rhetoric he communicated only what they already believed" (*The American Political Tradition*, Vintage Books, 1948, p. 190).

Superstars also help to make the theological discipline a worldly enterprise. By their writings and actions, they serve to confront the secular world with the insights of the Christian tradition. Though it is a term that may be badly misunderstood, they are in the best sense of the word evangelists. Their particular area of address is to those Schleiermacher called "the cultured despisers of religion." It is, I believe, a very important aspect of contemporary mission.

Reinhold Niebuhr performed this par-

ticular function with conspicuous success. As a modern circuit-rider, speaking about forty times a year in college and university chapels, he confronted the academic and intellectual community with the Christian faith as a singularly powerful force, capable of illuminating the human situation with real light. It became apparent, as he expounded biblical passages with rare insight, that the Christian faith was a massive, subtle, and profound interpretation of "the nature and destiny of man." Such expositions might not lead others to accept the faith as truth, but no longer could Christian faith be dismissed with supercilious condescension. This was no small service to render the faith in Niebuhr's era. It should indicate that not only do the Fulton Sheens and Billy Grahams deserve the status of

evangelists, but the John Courtney Murrays and the Reinhold Niebuhrs as well.

There are many illustrations of Niebuhr's impact. The task is not so much one of discovery but of selection. Historian William E. Leuchtenburg recounts an incident from his experience at Cornell. As a seventeen-year-old freshman, hitherto successful in avoiding church attendance, he was told to be sure to be in chapel on Sunday to hear an unusual preacher. The person who delivered the summons was the Jewish girl who was president of the campus chapter of the Young Communist League. Yale historian David Brion Davis notes, in line with Dennis McCann's observation, that today no Protestant preacher could make anything like Niebuhr's impact on the academic and intellectual commu-

nity. This citing of tributes from academia could go on and on because Reinhold Niebuhr, refusing to practice a cloistered kind of theological existence, demonstrated that Christian faith had validity by reason of its profound analysis of the human venture.

So while Reinhold Niebuhr may be American theology's "last superstar," I am unable to celebrate the lack of such luminaries today. A survey of the contemporary theological scene makes me feel that the American poet, Edwin Arlington Robinson, has given us in a couple of lines a fitting description, when he speaks of:

... books that are as altars where
we kneel
To consecrate the flicker, not the
flame.

Books: **ABSOLUTELY ABSENT**

TWO YEARS ago, in the summer and fall of 1984, it almost appeared as if *Commonweal* had space for no one except Thomas Sheehan. During that time nearly three entire issues were devoted to responses to Sheehan's lengthy review essay, "Revolution in Catholicism," first published in *The New York Review of Books* (June 14, 1984). Now, with the publication of *The First Coming*, Sheehan gives us a sustained treatment of his major point. Readers are offered a "post-liberal" and even post-Christian interpretation of the Jesus event which basically abolishes christology. Jesus, for Sheehan, destroys the notion of God-in-himself, who now abdicates and disappears into justice and charity. Religion is transcended, and there is a kind of "undecidability" between humanity and divinity in a post-Jesus era. The "nameless and unattainable mystery" inscribed at the heart of being is now a bit more transparent.

Chronologically the book is surely post-liberal and post-Christian. But, qualitatively, is the book a true sublation of the contribution of "liberal" scholars and even of the Christian reality; is it a true "higher synthesis" which is more adequate to experience? My own impres-

THE FIRST COMING

Thomas Sheehan

Random House, \$17.95, 272 pp.

William M. Thompson

sion is that the book moves, not in the direction of being more comprehensive, but less. The reality and range of human religious experience grows progressively truncated. In Sheehan's account, the "Abba" of Jesus seems (with emphasis!) but a cipher for human charity and justice. When Justin Martyr spoke of Jesus' "first coming" as the abandonment of privilege and divine form, the divine *kenosis* or self-emptying is probably what's meant. But Sheehan reads this as meaning the divine disappearance. I think. Maybe.

Readers will not be disappointed by the flow and pathos of the text. The introductory survey of the quests for the historical Jesus announces the theme: Jesus entertained no divine or christological aspirations. These are, for varying reasons, the creations of the later church. Sheehan intensifies and probably exaggerates the element of discontinuity between the pre- and post-Easter Jesus,

never effectively engaging the large body of scholarship which argues for a significant measure of continuity. Why the misinterpretation of Bultmann on this point? Why the neglect of Schillebeeckx on this same point, especially since Sheehan seems to refer (at least indirectly) to him throughout? Why the refusal to engage the possibility of discontinuity-within-continuity? Still, in fairness let me say that what Sheehan programmatically announces in this section he tries to argue in the book's remainder. So let us be patient.

Part One attempts an "imaginative reconstruction" of the historical Jesus on the basis of the various quests. The author has done a lot of reading, but it's very difficult to trace the links between sources and conclusions. How does Sheehan make his choices among differing accounts? By what criteria and warrants does he accept or reject evidence? This all remains unstated. He says he is building upon the questers. In some respects, surely. In others, that's like saying one can complete the upper levels of a building with only a bulldozer.

In any case, Jesus is presented as reducing apocalyptic to its existential core. This seems to mean that he relativizes

Torah and futuristic speculations in the interests of charity and justice. At first we're told that the prophet Jesus offers people the Father's presence, a presence seeking a response of mercy for the neighbor. But soon we are told that God abdicates his presence. At times, too, it seems as if the Kingdom preached by Jesus (which the author tends to privatize) is both present and future. But more commonly, futurity collapses into presence. Which would cohere with a non-theocentric horizon of thought, from which the author *seems* to move (a true futurity to the kingdom would presuppose, I think, a doctrine of divine transcendence).

Part Two is an intriguingly deconstructive (Sheehan's word) analysis of the genesis of the Resurrection belief. Ultimately Sheehan embraces a species of the "illusory projection thesis": what occurred was a change of awareness on Simon's part, from feeling that he had let Jesus down to sensing a form of forgiveness and coming to believe in charity and justice. The risen Jesus is a hypostatized projection of this interior state. So too are the appearances. The author clearly rejects an afterlife: "A movement that should have accepted the fact that Jesus was dead, and then gone on from there, ended up trying to hope him out of the grave."

The author's own reconstruction runs somewhat like this: potential believers hear the news that Jesus is risen and soon find themselves believing it; they settle on one particular apocalyptic formula to express this conviction: "Jesus has been raised from the dead"; finally they concretize the formula by connecting it with an empty tomb belief: an apocalyptic angel announces Jesus' rising at the tomb and indeed Jesus must be risen because the tomb is empty! Thus the "hardly" apocalyptic message of Jesus finds itself reapocalypticized and even historicized (when the tomb's emptiness becomes a "historical fact" proving the Resurrection).

Along the way the author displays some powerful insights into the possible cluster of events constituting the Resurrection experiences: a moving and poetic section on Jesus' glance at the Simon

betraying him; a challenging analysis of the stages of the Markan Resurrection subnarrative; intriguing analyses of the tomb's rock-door and the angel-young man.

Disappointingly, the reader will find no sustained treatment (in fact, hardly a mention) of alternative reconstructions. Schillebeeckx's own more comprehensive analysis, as inchoately set forth in his *Jesus* and then nuanced in the *Interim Report*, is not tackled (and this is particularly unfortunate, for some might read Sheehan's view as a popularized version of Schillebeeckx — in fact, they are contraries). But besides not engaging the likes of Schillebeeckx, Kasper, Rahner, O'Collins, etc., the author somewhat exuberantly believes in the plausibility of his hunches. Again, this is the problem of the lack of articulated warrants and criteria of argumentation, a problem pervading the book as a whole.

The complete absence of Jesus does have religious significance: it means the end of religion. In a symbolic sense, the empty tomb was the last word that Jesus the prophet uttered. His mission had been to undo religion and its God and to put radical mercy, the living of the present-future, in its place. And at the end of his mission he, so to speak, dissolved even himself, wiped out every trace, left not even a corpse, only an absolute absence.

Thomas Sheehan
The First Coming

Finally, though, as von Hügel once suggested, the issue of the resurrection is but a corollary of believing in a loving and faithful Divine Mystery. Here, I think, is the issue upon which Sheehan should concentrate his considerable powers of exposition. According to Sheehan, human seeking finds its correlative in "absolute absence." Unfortunately, we get only the statement of this proposition, rather than real argumentation on its behalf. (How we might even know about something so absolutely absent isn't explained.) This absence points to a kind of illusory "more" which sets

us seeking and thus actualizes our peculiarly human ability to search and know. Jesus' risen "absence" is but an example of this absolute absence behind our human questing. Somehow this absolute absence opens up a space for simple human mercy and justice. Is this Feuerbach we're encountering at the end of this "tunnel"?

Part Three follows the "older" schematization of scholars such as Hahn and Fuller (who has nuanced his views) as it reconstructs the stages in the emergence of biblical christology. Thus, we move from a more functional and less exalted to a more ontological and "high" christology as we progress from the early Palestinian, to the Jewish-Hellenistic, and on to the simply Hellenistic horizons of thought. Sheehan puts a lot of weight on the *parousia*'s delay as the catalyst resulting in Jesus' divinization, a step which constitutes the disciples' "original sin."

My own suggestion is that the terms in which Sheehan chooses to set his analysis render his reconstruction less probable than it could be. The trend in scholarship is to move away from the neat, three-state schematization, arguing for a constant interpenetration between Jewish and Hellenistic influences. The distinction between functional and ontological christologies smacks of a projection of a much later, idealistic metaphysics upon a more holistic biblical anthropology. And where is the proof (better: data) that the *parousia*'s delay was such a big crisis for the early church? There is little in the biblical text to commend this thesis, and Jaroslav Pelikan has questioned whether it makes much sense of the post-biblical early church either.

The book's final conclusion: "Jesus is ultimately dispensable." It is Christianity which hypostasized the Kingdom in Jesus and reconstituted religion. If we would hear Jesus' message "without Christ," we would find that "God has disappeared into justice and mercy." This is Sheehan's central point.

In the end, I would suggest that the major issue the book raises is the plausibility — or not — of theism. The debate might usefully focus here, rather than on

arguments about biblical data and their possible reconstruction. The seeming a-theism of the author casts a supinely confusing shadow upon the entire book, from its positivistic methodology to its austere non-religious conclusions. If God really is "unattainable" or "absolutely absent" in the normal sense such terms would carry, then of course christology is futile. Jesus, we Christians believe, should be able to develop people's God-consciousness and praxis, but the horizon presupposed is one of genuine openness to a Divine Mystery. Jesus can pipe us a tune, but we must do some dancing. I had been hoping that Sheehan would engage in a more sustained treatment of this issue of theism, perhaps introducing us to some of his work on Karl Rahner and even Martin Heidegger. But there was to be none of this.

A perhaps not unrelated issue is the relative absence of any soteriology — any theory of salvation or redemption — throughout the work. I say "relative" absence, since the references to justice and mercy could be given a soteriological twist were they to be developed in a certain direction. But they weren't. In any case, Sheehan's seeming enthronement (and possible idolization?) of humanity might look different were he to confront (in the text, of course!) the night side of the *humanum*, in both its individual and its sociopolitical manifestations. An incarnational theism sounds a bit more meaningful in the face of human evil and sin. This touches upon the important contribution of political, liberation, and feminist theology to the refurbishing of christology, but there is, I believe, not even a mention of this throughout the book. In fact, the language used is rather consistently unattentive to sexist issues. The references to justice and mercy are never spelled out, and seem to be interpreted in a more early Enlightenment, quasi-Feuerbachian mode. In fact, the author rather consistently separates politics and religion even in his reconstruction of the historical Jesus (which strikes me as rather anachronistic). This, I think, even further weakens the author's claim that he is offering us a truly "post-modern" restatement of christology.

I would suggest that the book's vintage

is early Enlightenment, reflecting the extremely secularistic wing of that movement. It is an eclectic fusion of secularistic approaches we have met before, something like a cabbage warmed up for a second time. Still, it merits a further look. The issues of the "first" Enlightenment are truly legitimate and foundational. I only wish the author had engaged the theological response to the Enlightenment in a somewhat prolonged manner. As it is, the horizon of thought of a secularistic "consensus" dominates the work in a rather foregone way. Additionally, the issues of the later, second Enlightenment (Freud, Marx, et al., with their deepened awareness of personal and social irrationality), not to mention our

new cross-cultural context, hardly peep out in the text, if at all. Incidentally, why the complete absence of footnotes throughout all but Part One?

From my own perspective, however, there is a hint of a move beyond the radically secularistic option. Sheehan enthrones justice and mercy, and not simply the human ego or reason. He breaks out in praise, not of a closed and dogmatic rational system, but of a human questing and seeking. To be sure, at this stage of his search he claims to meet only an unattainable and absolutely absent "more." But where there's a "more," there's hope. And where that "more" gifts us with justice and mercy, there's even more hope!

The quandaries of conception

BRAVE NEW PEOPLE

D. Gareth Jones
Eerdmans, \$8.95 paper, 224 pp.

MAKING BABIES

Peter Singer and Deane Wells
Scribner's, \$14.95, 245 pp.

A QUESTION OF LIFE

Mary Warnock
Basil Blackwell, \$8.95 paper, 128 pp.

Thomas A. Shannon

TECHNICAL innovations and interventions at the initiation of an individual human life have raised profound religious, legal, and moral questions. The first use of *in vitro* fertilization started an ongoing debate over these birth technologies. This is particularly the case since they have become more widespread and raise public policy issues.

The three books under review examine many of these questions, moving from general issues to specific public policy recommendations. The authors are from Australia and the United Kingdom, where these activities originated.

Brave New People, the most general of the three, is interesting in that Intervarsity Press, which originally published the book, withdrew it from its U.S. market, presumably because it was too liberal. Many readers of the book,

myself included, will find that judgment astounding.

Jones presents an exceptionally compelling analysis of the major issues at the commencement of life. The book is compelling, first, because Jones is a professor of anatomy and uses his scientific background to set a context for the issues. Second, Jones writes from the perspective of evangelical Christianity, which takes the Bible seriously but not literally. Third, Jones is exceptionally thorough and cogent in his argumentation. This is particularly important because he does not use a philosophical method but relies on an examination of relevant biblical material. Fourth, the book is comprehensive, both scientifically and analytically. It provides a good overview of the issues.

There are several controlling concepts in the book. Technically, Jones warns of the potential for dehumanization and reductionism in technological medicine. Religiously, Jones argues that humans are limited in their options because they are creatures in a God-ordered and God-sustained world. Ethically, humans are to echo the moral responsibility of God by acting wisely and in love. This general framework is developed and enhanced throughout the book.

Two examples will help orient readers to his method of analysis. Jones rejects

artificial insemination by donor because: it exaggerates the reproductive dimension of marriage; it puts asunder what God has joined by disrupting the unity of the marriage and the unity of fetal development originating from the partners; and it disrupts the manifestation of mutual love between husband and wife. Yet Jones does not reject a judicious use of artificial contraception, *in vitro* fertilization, or some forms of gene therapy. With respect to abortion, Jones also walks a narrow path. He presents a strong biblical orientation towards the value of the fetus and of human life in the context of a biological description of the developing fetus. He concludes that the view of the fetus should be high but not absolute, and that the fetus should receive considerable, but not absolute, protection. Thus, Jones concludes that abortion for genetic reasons may be the least tragic of many options.

This book deserves a wide audience. It provides an excellent model of integrating biblical fidelity with technological options. And, while certainly conservative, it is not doctrinaire and thus shows a possible middle ground for many of our current discussions.

Singer, a philosopher, and Wells, a member of the Australian Parliament, present an entirely different framework and analysis. On the one hand, the method is philosophical and rational in its outlook. On the other hand, it is a fairly strident assault against Roman Catholicism's position on many of the birth technologies.

First, the book provides a valuable look at what is happening in Australia with respect to clinical practice, public policy, and public opinion, since Australia is a major center of such activities. Second, the book contains several sets of international guidelines on the birth technologies. Such a compilation is useful because some are not easy to obtain. Third, the book defends the new birth technologies by rejecting claims that they are unnatural and that the embryo has a special moral claim. The argument that *in vitro* fertilization is unnatural is disproved by rejecting three senses of natural: what occurs in the normal course of events; what is against God's will; what

contradicts natural law. Rejecting these senses of natural does not, of course, establish their claim that what is natural is rational.

Three arguments establishing the moral status of the fetus are similarly rejected: granting rights to the fetus based on species membership is inappropriate because it is a form of prejudice known as "speciesism"; since egg and sperm have no special moral status in themselves, neither does the embryo out of which they are made (thus committing the fallacy of division); unique genetic constitution confers no special status because no such status is assigned to other entities with unique genetic constitution.

The book also reviews several technologies: surrogacy, ectogenesis, cloning, and sex selection. Singer and Wells conclude with a section on how to handle the policy dimensions of these complex issues. They suggest that societies should: "... gather together those best qualified to consider the issues in an open and informed manner, unimpeded by adherence to sectarian doctrines that other members of society cannot be expected to accept." Possibly exempt from such sectarian doctrines are the rationalism and libertarianism to which the authors are committed.

Mary Warnock's *A Question of Life* is the report of a commission established in 1982 by the British government to examine the social, ethical, and legal implication of developments in what they call "human assisted reproduction."

The report has the singular virtue of being clear with respect to methodology (presenting reasons for one's moral sentiments) and language. The definitions, arguments, and recommendations are presented in an unusually clear form, remarkably free of jargon. Second, one can find the recommendations (all sixty-four of them) either by locating the boldfaced sections in the report or by turning to the list of them at the end, where they are cross-referenced by paragraph number. Third, the report contains thoughtfully phrased minority dissents.

Generally, the commission supports many of the birth technologies already in place: artificial insemination by husband or donor, *in vitro* fertilization, the freez-

ing of embryos, and embryo donation (but not through the technique of lavage). The commission recommended legislation to make criminal the creating or operation of agencies to facilitate surrogacy and to make illegal all surrogate contracts. The primary basis for such a strong position is the potential dangers associated with commercial exploitation of surrogacy and the dangers of treating individuals as only a means in achieving one's wishes. The difficult issue for the commission was the use of the embryo in research. The commission argues that while the human embryo is entitled to respect (based in ethics and law), such respect is not absolute and research can be permitted in some circumstances: no other research material is available; the embryo cannot be developed beyond fourteen days, the time of early neural development; and provided consent be obtained from the couple whose embryo it is. Finally, a licensing body is to be established to regulate research and infertility services. This board is to have lay representatives, one of whom is to be the chairperson.

These three books clearly represent the conservative, liberal, and moderate points of view. The books represent the discussions and arguments being made with respect to the birth technologies. They also reveal the tremendous number of developments that have been made since 1978 and clearly establish the taken-for-grantedness of many topics literally inconceivable only five years ago.

REVIEWERS

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Confessions of a religious agnostic

THE DIARY OF BEATRICE WEBB

VOL. 4: 1924-1943, "THE WHEEL OF LIFE"

Edited by Norman and Jeanne MacKenzie
Belknap/Harvard, \$25, 519 pp.

Neville Braybrooke

Is it possible, one asks oneself, to be a Marxist-Democrat—or is this a contradiction in terms? The question is prompted by reading the fourth and final volume of *The Diary of Beatrice Webb*, covering the years 1924 to 1943. She is sixty-six when it opens, and her husband Sidney has just been appointed president of the Board of Trade by the first Labor government.

The Webbs at this period still eyed Communism with suspicion. Beatrice told her husband's constituents at a rally in 1927 that the Russian Revolution had set back "the achievement of economic democracy in England for half a century." Yet, less than fifteen years later, she is referring to Russia as one of the world's "three great Democracies," the other two being Britain and the United States. The remark is the most puzzling in the entire diary. To be understood, it has to be seen in the context of the development of her thought during the 1930s.

In 1931, when the second Labor government fell, the Webbs abandoned their belief in what Sidney called "the inevitability of gradualness" — namely, the belief that there would follow a slow and steady transition from a capitalist society to a socialist one. As the decade progressed, the Webbs remained democrats, but their views grew more radical and their interest focused more and more on the Russian experiment. So, in 1932, they decided to go and see the country for themselves. When they disembarked at Leningrad, Beatrice handed the Russian captain of their ship a three-thousand-word memorandum in which she noted that, among other things, no chamberpots were provided in the cabins, and that Jewish passengers had been served with pork. Her memoranda always had a reforming end in view. Certainly the Rus-

sian experience proved a turning-point for them. It enabled them to say: "We see the promised land, though not near. . ."

Aristotle (whose works she passionately revered) asserts in his writings on *Politics* (book 5, chapter 1) that democracy arose from people's thinking that if they were equal in any respect, they were equal absolutely. But to bring about such a society it was necessary to introduce laws and maintain them. Marxism shares a similar egalitarian base — but with a difference: it espouses the eventual withering away of the state. What was meant by "eventual," or how long it would take, was a subject on which the Webbs were unwilling to commit themselves. Democratic Communism in the meantime became the ideal to be worked for. In their book on *Soviet Communism*, which appeared in 1935, their hopes for the promised land are outlined. One of their nephews by marriage described it as a utopian dream. He was Malcolm Muggeridge.

The first edition of the Webbs' book carried the sub-title "A New Civilization?" The question-mark was dropped with the second edition. It was their final joint-enterprise, and they came to regard it as a last will and testament; however the new civilization presented them with problems. Russia was still a savage and backward land. In the diary there are references to "the trapdoor disappearances of unwanted persons"; Sidney also spoke of Soviet farming "incidentally liquidating the kulaks." Then there were the Moscow show trials under the Stalinist regime. Could such happenings in a new civilization be excused as merely "infantile disorders"? Lenin had first used the term after the revolution. At one point Beatrice admits: "One just shrugs one's shoulders."

So, along with the paradox of the Marxist-Democrat, goes another: that of the social reformer who champions the poor in her own country, but who stands by without protest when political purges and torture are carried out in another. Yet

no diarist of this century had a sharper pen when it came to writing about politicians at home. Patrick Hastings, who was Attorney General in 1924, is dismissed as a weasel of a man, "destitute of all the higher qualities of intellect." She doubts if Stanley Baldwin is capable of "a good day's brainwork." Of Ramsay MacDonald she remarks that he is "a magnificent substitute for a leader." She writes devastatingly, too, of jumped-up Labor wives, with their irredeemably common minds, ridiculous high-heeled shoes and desire to enter "smart Society" and mix with royalty. What partially brought down the first two Labor governments, she argues, was that its M.P.s, as individuals, wanted to live the lives of men of property and of rank. Social climbing in the Kremlin is a matter that she shrugs off.

Beatrice discovered in Communism a creed which satisfied her belief in equality and justice. Her belief in Christianity she had abandoned in her youth. All the same she continued to be drawn towards the mystical, and several times she men-

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tions the need to worship "some force beyond and above human nature." She longs to find a church without dogma — but "no such Church seems in sight." When will a leader arise, she asks, who will unite the intellect of an Aristotle, a Goethe or an Einstein with the moral genius of a Buddha, a Christ, or a St. Francis of Assisi? "I have no home for my religious faculty," she laments. "I wander about disconsolate." After reading *A Passage to India*, she identifies with the elderly Mrs. Moore and her feelings of being involved in "a spiritual muddledom." Beatrice copies out the paragraph and twice refers to the phrase.

The diary is superbly edited. The last entry dated 19 April 1943 was written eleven days before her death. In it she records how in the past few minutes the electric fire has ceased to heat her, the wireless has gone dead, and her cup of tea has turned cold. "I ceased to exist." Likewise, she predicts that kingdoms and states — even her diary — will cease to exist. Then suddenly she changes her mind and underlines her final words for greater emphasis: "I feel that this is *inconceivable* — and therefore that it will *not happen*." To explain this sudden change — or what some might call a keeping open of all options — it is worth remembering that between belief and disbelief, between the idea of annihilation and an afterlife, Beatrice frequently found herself torn. A year earlier she had defined her position when she had made the paradoxical statement: "I am a religious agnostic."

In Brief

BENJAMIN CONSTANT AND THE MAKING OF MODERN LIBERALISM, by Stephen Holmes. Yale University, \$27.50, 352 pp.

Who was Benjamin Constant? Constant is almost completely unknown in the United States. A graduate student in political philosophy can spend an entire semester on modern political thought without hearing his name. All of that should change. Stephen Holmes, professor of political science at the University

In our June 6 issue, Debra Campbell's name was inadvertently omitted at the end of her article on Catholic women preachers, *Lost Innovation* (p. 334). Our apologies to the author.

of Chicago, has written the first major study of Constant to be published by an American press. In it he offers a sustained critical appreciation of Constant as a democratic theorist. He also manages to be genuinely engaging, for he is a first-rate writer.

To the extent that Constant is known on this side of the Atlantic he is typically treated as a defender of privacy, someone who hated the state. The plausibility of this claim rests heavily on Constant's personal history. A Swiss-born cosmopolitan *philosophe* who moved easily among an international aristocratic elite, the excesses of the Jacobins horrified him despite his own great dislike for the *ancien régime*. He flirted with Napoleon, but found him equally dismaying. He eventually advocated liberal constitutional monarchy. Therefore, the argument goes, he understood the precious nature of privacy and foresaw many of modernity's ominous political tendencies.

Holmes partly agrees with this older wisdom, but goes far beyond it to reconstruct a fuller, more persuasive picture of Constant's political theory. He shows that Constant also greatly valued the public. A proper balance between the public and the private was the true promise of liberal politics.

Constant brought a formidable historical, social, and psychological learning to the formulation of his political philosophy. He resembled in this respect Rousseau and Montesquieu. But he was more than a scholar. Constant also deeply involved himself in the great social and political transformations of his time. Thus he often said and did apparently inconsistent things. Holmes handles this feature of his career well and relates it expertly to his political theory. Politics made Constant unhappy and irritable, but his tenacious mental grip on his ideal of "government by discussion," of robust public debate within the

framework of limited government, always brought this supposed theorist of the private back into the public arena. He played a critically important role in the early development of French democracy.

But does Constant speak to late twentieth-century America? Holmes does not address this issue fully, locating his book instead within a raging debate among political theorists about the virtues and vices of liberal man. Yet to the extent that Holmes revitalizes Constant's ideal of "government by discussion" he cannot help but speak to a time in which certain types of opinion and speech are considered increasingly illegitimate. Strange as it may seem (but Constant would have savored this strangeness fully), reading Constant and talking about him in America may yet become a political act. RICHARD M. VALELLY

CHRISTIANS AND THE MILITARY: THE EARLY EXPERIENCE. By John Helgeland, Robert J. Daly, and J. Patout Burns. Fortress Press, \$5.95, 101 pp.

The authors' thesis is that although "the basic thrust of the Lord's teaching is clearly toward nonviolence," this did not lead the early church to be unambiguously pacifist or opposed to military service. The anti-military writings of Fathers like Tertullian and Hippolytus express not pacifism but opposition to the idolatry — to the intricate system of oaths, symbols, and sacrifices which permeated Roman military life. Origen's opposition to military service, on the other hand, stemmed from a Platonic spiritualization of the Christian vocation. Christians did in fact serve in the legions, although uneasily: those who were martyred for refusing or leaving service were rejecting not warfare but army religion. All this is argued with close references to the ancient texts, and with representative passages cited at length. The authors do not make a brief for just-war theory. Indeed, their portrait of the thinking on war by Eusebius, Ambrose, and Augustine is darkly shadowed. One comes away from this historical study feeling that the experience of the early church may provide far less guidance than many have supposed when it comes to deciding what the Gospel demands of Christians today in

the face of war and violence. Still the authors are convinced that "if history, philosophy, and theology teach us anything, then it is that no lasting peace can be built on anything less than truth."

P.S.

Church/world watch

(Continued from page 363)

difference requires further changes in U.S. strategy. I hold a more absolute view of non-combatant immunity than Nye, but his proposal is radical enough to demand the restructuring of U.S. targeting policy.

In brief, Nye has joined ethics and strategy in a way which guarantees that ethicists, strategists, citizens, and policymakers will have to read his book.

J. BRYAN HEHIR

(J. Bryan Hehir is senior research scholar at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics and research professor of ethics and international politics at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown).



Correspondence

(Continued from page 354)

threatening their obliteration.

Thousands of clergymen of all faiths have signed a declaration of support for SDI. In essence these ministers, priests, and rabbis note that technological arguments abound, pro and con, on the SDI issue, and the signers assume no expertise in this technical dispute. But these clergymen properly insist that pursuit of non-nuclear defenses is morally superior to continued reliance on nuclear destruction, and that if such defenses prove fea-

sible the United States is morally obliged to adopt them.

I can only surmise that Mr. Russett's ill-disguised fury at the concept of non-nuclear defense reflects the general dismay and disarray in the nuclear freeze movement. The president's SDI program exposed the false dilemma posed by the "Freeze or Fry" slogan, and utterly destroyed the notion that the nuclear freeze movement held the moral high ground. Mr. Russett was part of that movement, and now joins it again in groping wildly for arguments against an effort which makes common and ethical sense to almost everyone who has no political axe to grind.

One can only hope that the bishops get a less-biased and more knowledgeable "principal consultant" next time around on the pastoral letter.

DANIEL O. GRAHAM

Lt. Gen., USA (Ret.)
Director, High Frontier

The author replies:

General Graham's letter deserves a brief reply (and only a brief one).

He freely grants — in contrast to the message of the famous rainbow television cartoon — that SDI can provide no "impenetrable shield," and says I "rattle on" about the damage done to population centers by only 161 warheads. I suppose I do. They would destroy us as a functioning society, or worse. I am glad he does not consider that "acceptable damage," and I did *not* say the Reagan administration did either. We are talking about nuclear war, not a shooting gallery score where all but 161 out of 10,000 looks great.

Graham provides a benign image of SDI as a "non-nuclear" defense, ignoring the plans for nuclear-explosion-driven X-ray lasers and nuclear-armed terminal phase defenses.

My "fury" is directed precisely at the pretense that SDI is morally superior to MAD. My article was devoted to showing that, on the contrary, SDI would bear all the moral burdens of MAD. It would *reinforce* rather than replace MAD, by strengthening incentives to target soft and still-vulnerable cities. (In the May 12

issue of *The New Republic*, Leon Wieseltier, no particular friend of the bishops' pastoral letter, also showed how SDI would "celestialize" MAD.)

Most readers will appreciate the subtlety of General Graham's statement that "Mr. Russett parrots all the anti-SDI arguments presented by the Soviet Union."

BRUCE M. RUSSETT

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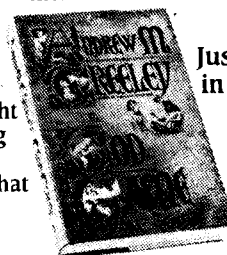
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